

FATAL OBEDIENCE;

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF

MR. FREELAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
Mr. F R E E L A N D.

(WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.)

SAVILLE, by returning home sooner than usual that evening, (though he had been very friendly since the accident I had met with, in assisting me) put a stop to the conversation on that subject between us.

I could not close my eyes all night, so much were my thoughts employed
Vol. II. B about

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about a scheme which I had formed to preserve Gertrude, if possible, from dishonour.

As soon as I imagined that Mr. Ashurst was stirring, I went to him, and desired to speak with him in private.

I told him I was come to snatch his daughter from destruction, since the situation of his affairs had forced him, in a manner, I found, to think of sacrificing her to a man who was too destitute of generous sentiments to attempt to relieve his necessities without so infamous a reward; and that all I asked in return was his solemn promise never to oblige his daughter to see Mr. Dawley, who had the basest designs upon her. "On that condition, sir," continued I, "you shall receive from me the fifteen hundred pounds, of which you stand in need, immediately; and I will not desire the repayment of that sum till it suits you to repay it."

He

He paused a moment, turned from me, and knitted his brows; then looking at me fiercely, replied, "But I suppose you will ask me for my daughter?"

"Never," said I, "I am not sufficiently blest by fortune to have it in my power to make her happy: but I have too much regard for her innocence, too much esteem for her goodness, to bear to see her given up to a man who, by only wishing to seduce her, renders himself, at once, unworthy of her; nor would the amiable virtuous girl, ever tamely submit to become the mistress of any man; no, not even to save her father."

"Mighty fine all this," replied he with a sneer, "mighty fine—but, my young man, where the devil did you pick up these high-flown notions of honour, and so forth?"

B. 2 "From"

“ From the excellent instructions of
“ the dearest and most exemplary of pa-
“ rents,” answered I, “ to whom I think
“ myself more indebted for their inesti-
“ mable admonitions than for the for-
“ tune which I inherited from them :
“ little indeed was the fortune I inhe-
“ rited; but, had it been ever so large, it
“ would have made no change in my
“ sentiments with regard to my obliga-
“ tions to them : and you, sir, you,
“ who have either been taught other
“ notions, or have adopted them of
“ your own accord, you also are obli-
“ ged to my dear deceased parents; for
“ to them you owe that honesty and
“ that fidelity which, I may venture to
“ say, you have ever found in me. And
“ will you then, who have reaped so
“ much advantage from my education,
“ as I have hitherto transacted your
“ business with diligence and integrity;
“ will you, I say, sir, be ready to con-
“ nive

"nive at the ruin of a virtuous an only
 "daughter? Think, oh! think, fir—con-
 "sider seriously—spare me the pain of
 "relating what I cannot utter without
 "the deepest concern, and what must
 "be doubly unwelcome to your ears :
 "spare me that pain, and be the careful
 "guardian of your Gertrude's honour."

I stopped here ; I was too much affected to proceed : he also, I saw, was moved : he turned from me to hide his emotions for some moments, while my overcharged heart vented itself in broken sobs, which shook my whole frame.

At length, reaching out one hand to me, while the other covered his face, he said, " Make yourself easy, Freeland ;
 " you have overcome me by your superior virtues : Gertrude shall be protected from Dawley's attempts : I did
 " not know your worth till now ; yet
 " she cannot be yours, even if I accept
 " of

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“ of your offer of this loan, for which I
“ am ready to give you my bond.”

“ I assure you again and again, fir,”
said I eagerly, “ upon my honour, I
“ will not ask such a blessing, till I am
“ deserving of it, by being enabled to
“ support Miss Ashurst in a proper
“ manner; till I have merited her
“ esteem and affection: I have never
“ made my addresses to her; I never
“ thought myself in a situation; and I
“ have now put it out of my power to
“ make them.”

“ You will not then object to a pro-
“ per match for her, if such a one
“ should be proposed?”

“ By my life, I will not,” said I; “ on
“ the contrary, I will use all my interest
“ with her to persuade her to accept of
“ the first agreeable proposal of that
“ kind, which will, no doubt, in due
“ time be paid to her merit: and to
“ convince you of my sincerity in this
“ affair,

“ affair, she will tell you that I pressed
 “ her to give her hand to Mr. Blyth.”

“ Ay! what objection could she
 “ make to him?” cried he aloud—then
 muttering to himself, added, “ Perhaps
 “ Blyth, if he had married my daughter,
 “ might not have assisted me, and so
 “ ’tis better as it is.”

We, then, settled the stock; but before we parted, I begged him to give his daughter the consolation of hearing him forbid her to receive Mr. Dawley again. He agreed to my request, and kept his word.

I had, now, the satisfaction, the heart-felt satisfaction, to see Gertrude restored to her former tranquility with regard to herself; yet she still wept for her father’s losses; and her tears made me long to render her quite easy about them, by telling her how they were supplied; but I did not care to load her with what she would, I knew, have reckoned

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a great obligation to me. I, therefore, only, in general, intreated her to banish her fears; and assured her, that Mr. Ashurst's affairs were far from being so bad as she had imagined them to be.

“ You are, always, contriving to give
“ me comfort, Mr. Freeland,” said she, with a smile of acknowledgment that went to my heart, and soon resumed her accustomed chearfulness; setting herself, however, to retrench all unnecessary expences in the family, and particularly in her own dress; contriving to make always a decent appearance, without laying out much money to support it; and if Mr. Ashurst had been as prudent abroad as she was at home, his affairs might have been retrieved: but when people suffer themselves to contract vicious habits, they seldom or ever can divest themselves of them.

Mr. Dawley still visited Mrs. Coker and her daughter, and endeavoured,

as much as possible, to throw himself in Gertrude's way, but without success: he was, therefore, strongly prompted to find out the cause of the alteration in Mr. Ashurst's behaviour to him.

Sukey Coker, having listened at the door, when I was shut up with Mr. Ashurst in his room, between the parlour and the compting-house, was very capable of informing him; but did not communicate what she had heard immediately, because she thought her intelligence deserved no small reward. Both the mother and daughter were silent till they had hopes of making him come down handsomely: their designs at last succeeded, and, on the day afterwards, Miss Ashurst received the following letter from an unknown hand.

Madam,

It is a common observation, and not the less just for being a trite one, that

B 5

people

people frequently, to avoid one evil, or something which appears an evil to them, run into another much greater. Thus, your obstinate resolution to prevail on your father to refuse all assistance from Mr. Dawley, who was well able to make you large amends for what he was willing that you should consider as a piece of condescension, has thrown you intirely into Mr. Freeland's power, who, by advancing Mr. Ashurst fifteen hundred pounds, will expect you to make good that sum to him in the most agreeable manner to himself, whenever he is in a humour to demand it: but take care, Miss Ashurst; there is no dependence upon men who conceal obligations only to enhance the value of them. Freeland may pretend love to you, but whether he marries you or not, if you yield to him you must absolutely starve together: and a man certainly can give no stronger proof of a passion
entirely

entirely selfish, than by studying to decoy the object, under the empty pretences of generosity and honour, into a situation which must render her, and the unhapy fruits of it, miserable for ever. Resist him, therefore; be wise in time, and conceal this friendly advice from the man who seeks nothing but your ruin in the gratification of his pleasure. Avoid Freeland as you would a house with the plague in it, and entertain grateful sentiments for your sincere well-wisher,

ANONYMOUS.

No sooner had Miss Ashurst read the foregoing epistle, than with a heart bursting with gratitude she flew into the parlour, in which I happened to be alone; and, calling me her preserver and deliverer, thanked me a thousand times for saving her from Dawley; though she at the same time, with tears, assured me that she was excessively hurt to know

that her father had taken nearly my little all from me.

“ I never intended that you should “ know what I have done,” said I, extremely surprized and vexed at this discovery, “ having hoped that the “ conversation between Mr. Ashurst “ and me would not have transpired ; “ nor can I at present guess by what “ means it has transpired.”

“ The means,” replied the charming, grateful girl, smiling through her tears, “ I must conceal from you, to “ punish you a little for your having “ concealed so extraordinary an act of “ generosity from me : but I will weary “ heaven with my prayers, Mr. Free- “ land, that it may be repaid a thousand “ times over.”

“ Oh ! do not thus oppress me, Miss “ Ashurst,” cried I, “ I cannot bear it ; “ but if you really think yourself in the “ least indebted to me, and insist upon “ over-

“overwhelming me with acknowledg-
 “ments in this manner, I will put you
 “into a way to repay me. Tell me
 “only, how you came at this intelli-
 “gence.”

“Why, from a letter in an unknown
 “hand,” said she, with some hesitation,
 as if that answer was meerly in compli-
 ance with my persuasions against her
 own consent.

“Letters of that kind,” said I, “are
 “commonly written by our greatest
 “enemies, under the mask of friend-
 “ship, who, by concealing themselves,
 “are more capable of injuring us.
 “Let me, therefore, look at your letter,
 “Miss Ashurst; possibly, I may discover
 “the hand.”

“For that very reason,” said she,
 “I would keep it from you. I tremble
 “to think into what danger you may be
 “thrown by your resentment.”

“Be

“Be assured,” replied I, “that
“you have nothing to apprehend from
“my resentment, occasioned by the
“knowledge of what this letter contains: the contents of it will rather, I
“imagine, tend to preserve me from
“danger than prove detrimental to me.”

With much difficulty I got it from her, and presently guessed it to be the production of one of Dawley’s adherents: declaring, at the same time, that a man of his character was beneath all resentment, and no otherwise worthy of our notice, than to put us on our guard against him.

The composure with which I spoke, added to my thanks for this new proof of her confidence in me, at length calmed her, and removed her apprehensions.

As to myself, I thought the best and only way to deprive Mr. Dawley of all hopes, was to take no sort of notice of the letter to any person, nor even to
seem

seem to know any thing about it. For some time, therefore, we remained in a state of tranquillity. Mr. Ashurst, indeed, as he heard nothing of any payment from Mrs. Coker, began to lessen his civilities to her; and we were not sorry for the alteration of his carriage to her: the rest of the family made no change in their behaviour.

Lady Frolick, after having returned her wedding visits, set out for France with Sir Harry; and would have persuaded Miss Harvey to have accompanied her; but she chose to stay where she was, though the town began to grow empty.

Mrs. Coker and her daughter, in so deplorable a part of the year, were glad to saunter away their evenings in the Temple Gardens, and Grays-Inn-Walks, when they could not well afford a coach to the Park. Sometimes, indeed, Saville treated Sukey with an evening

evening at Sadlers Wells, or the Little Theatre in the Haymarket.

At the last mentioned place, Miss Coker took the fancy of a young fellow, one night, and she encouraged him, while Saville was chatting with her companion, to see her home, as it was moon-light. Saville, finding that she had picked a new acquaintance, left her to make the most of him, and she tripped chearfully into the city by the help of his arm.

They were received with great good humour by Mrs. Coker, who asked the young fellow to stay and eat a bit for taking care of her daughter, though she had never seen him before.

The young fellow, who was well-dressed, assumed all the airs of a gentleman, which he not contemptibly copied: and the mother and daughter were so far taken in by his appearance and behaviour, as to think it well worth
their

their while to give themselves out to be people of some consequence.

Mrs. Coker, therefore, with an intelligent look at her daughter, complained of the straitness of their lodgings. "But indeed," added she, "they are only taken for a time; as I am obliged to stay in the city because I expect my brother from the East Indies every day. When your uncle comes home, child," continued she to Miss Sukey, "I shall appear quite another woman; but I am willing to be near the India-house, that I may have the earliest intelligence of every ship's arrival."

Sukey caught the lie warm from her mother's lips, and doubled it, by adding, "Indeed, mamma, I shall be quite rejoiced to go to my uncle's seat in Wales, for the city does'nt at all agree with me."

Saville,

Saville, having perceived Sukey's eagerness to engage with this new man, dropped her on purpose, at the corner of a street; and then, peeping out from his concealment, kept them all the way in sight, came in soon after them, and slipped into a middle apartment, in which he had often hid himself for other purposes: in that apartment he overheard all that passed.

The young fellow, concerning whom they now believed they had a right to be inquisitive, said, that his name was Bently, and that he lived at the West end of the town. This account of himself was sufficient; he received a general invitation from the mother; and the daughter left nothing undone to let him see that she was extremely well pleased with him, while he seemed absolutely enamoured with her.

When he was gone, Saville came down to me, and related all that had
passed

passed under the seal of secrecy. I condoled with him on the probability of his losing his Sukey; begging him, at the same time, not to interrupt the lovers, as the girl would have good luck if she could get a husband.

“And would you, Freeland,” cried he, “with your excellent principles, suffer an honest fellow to be so drawn in? can you answer it to yourself to wink at a man’s marrying a——?”

These shrewd and sensible queries, which I so little expected from Saville, startled me; and made me feel the unjustness of my sentiments which my compassion for this poor wretch, whose situation was grown very critical, had excited in me. I thanked him, however, for reminding me, that in being over zealous in my duty towards one neighbour, I ought not to forget what, as a christian, I owed to another: “Yet methinks Saville,” added I, “some
“ provision

" provision should be made for this girl
 " to prevent her from committing those
 " indiscretions again through necessity ;
 " of which she has already been guilty
 " through want of fortitude."

" Hold, hold," said he, " girls of
 " her stamp are not so easily reclaimed :
 " however, I will make it my business
 " to find out the real character of this
 " new friend ; if he is good for any
 " thing I will not suffer him to marry
 " such a jade, who would deceive the
 " devil if she could ; and if he should
 " happen to turn out like herself, e'en
 " let them play upon each other."

In a few weeks Mr. Blyth came to
 town : he called on me, and made me a
 short visit ; telling me, when he went
 away, that he would in a day or two
 make a much longer one.

I confess I was not sorry to see him
 again ; I had ever, notwithstanding my
 love for Gertrude, wished to see her sett-
 led

led with a worthy man, as I well knew that I never should be able to make a proper provision for her myself: and though she had refused Blyth, and he had given up all thoughts of her, I was inclined to imagine, that as he was still disengaged, his passion might return; and that she, being more certain than ever of the indifferent situation of her father's affairs, might be induced to accept of an amiable man, whom she might, I believed, at length sufficiently love to make both him and herself happy. I seized the first moment, therefore, to hint my conjectures to her, and was surprized to find her still resolute to remain unmarried; declaring that honour forbade her to deceive such a man as Blyth, who deserved a better wife than she could possibly make him.

I admired her noble sentiments, but I could only admire them; I secretly repined that I was so unfortunate as not to be
able

able to do any thing more. possibly, I was criminal by so repining: perhaps I was too presumptuous to sigh after a felicity with which mortals are rarely blest: I certainly complained too soon of my lot in life, and I was punished for my precipitation. Short sighted man, like a froward child, often makes himself wretched on the first disappointment he meets with; and, by the folly of his behaviour, under the pressure of it, excludes himself from that happiness which those seldom fail to enjoy whom hope and resignation cheer with their brightest smiles.

But to return to Mr. Blyth: he came according to his promise; and, after a short introduction, told me that he believed he was now really determined to marry. "I have not, however, uttered a single syllable of love to the lady, yet," continued he.

"You

“ You are not then so very near matrimony,” replied I.

“ You shall hear, and then you’ll be better able to judge. As I am naturally of a serious contemplative disposition, I have accustomed myself, for these few years, to go every summer into a pleasant part of the country, which I have never seen before, and so take an apartment in a farm house, without even my own servant to attend me, that I may have an opportunity to enjoy the pleasantest season of the year agreeably to my own taste, and to be in the way of making observations unobserved. By these excursions I have made myself acquainted with some of the most delightful spots in England, without being interrupted by that ceremony and parade which hinder people from viewing such places in the most eligible manner.

“ In

“ In my last ramble, having, as I
“ thought, secured my lodging, I found
“ myself very happy in it ; but on the
“ second night of my arrival, the ho-
“ nest farmer came to tell me he was
“ sorry things had fallen out so cross,
“ but that his sister Higgins and her son
“ were coming, unexpectedly, to be
“ with them during the fair-time, and
“ that he could put her no where but in
“ my bed. Howsomever, Sir,” con-
tinued he, “ if you will let me step to
“ the parsonage, I am sure the rector
“ will give you house-room with all his
“ heart.

“ Though I felt some repugnance, I
“ confess, at going into a family in
“ which I should necessarily be more on
“ the footing of a visiter than a lodger,
“ I did not care to vex my honest far-
“ mer by a refusal, as he expressed so
“ much real concernment, at his being
“ obliged to turn me out in a manner, as
“ he

“ he called it. I therefore went with
 “ him to the rector’s where I had no rea-
 “ son to regret my change of lodging ;
 “ for I found in the owner of this hos-
 “ pitable mansion, the gentleman, the
 “ scholar, and the christian, and in his
 “ daughter, a very amiable girl, about
 “ two and twenty, sensible, well bred,
 “ and modest.

“ Lucy Manners is no beauty, but
 “ she wants not the brilliant eyes of a
 “ Kitty Harvey to render one blind to
 “ her failings, because she has none to
 “ be exposed ; nor does she want the
 “ bloom of Kitty’s complexion to
 “ heighten the charms arising from the
 “ modesty of her every look, the pro-
 “ priety of every word she utters, and
 “ the enchanting diffidence in her whole
 “ carriage ; her fearfulness of giving
 “ offence, renders her so extremely
 “ pleasing, that she has made a deep
 “ impression on my heart.

“ I soon conversed with her familiarly,
“ but it was sometime before I discovered
“ all her excellent qualities; and you will
“ smile, when I tell you that she became
“ irresistibly alluring in my eyes, by
“ shewing a sort of a desire to find out
“ all my merit (if any merit may be al-
“ lowed me). Yes she employed herself
“ in that manner, with such a winning
“ delicacy and simplicity, that she grew
“ every hour more and more agreeable to
“ me. In order, however, to be assured
“ that no ambitious views governed her
“ carriage, I carefully concealed my true
“ situation in life, throwing out obscure
“ hints that my fortune was but indif-
“ ferent. I was not treated with less re-
“ gard for those hints: for if I at any time
“ counterfeited a melancholy, foreign to
“ my nature, she caught the soft infec-
“ tion, and kindly pitied me for what I
“ never felt. In short, I soon flattered
“ myself, that no subject started by me
“ would be disagreeable to her.

“ While

“ While I was waiting, after having
 “ been absent above six weeks, to seize a
 “ proper moment for a declaration, I re-
 “ ceived a letter from my father, which
 “ contained a desire to see me, she was
 “ with me when I opened the letter. As
 “ I was really sorry to leave her, the dis-
 “ content which I felt appeared in my
 “ countenance. I could not, nor did I
 “ wish to hide it. A sympathetic sorrow
 “ soon clouded her brow. I surprized her
 “ looking at me with much concern, and
 “ told her that the letter she saw in my
 “ hand summoned me to town.

“ Does it? said she, turning her
 “ head aside to conceal her emotions:
 “ she could add no more.

“ When I bade her and her father fare-
 “ well, the latter kindly invited me to
 “ make his house again my own.

“ I thanked him, and said, that if
 “ ever fortune favoured my wishes, I
 “ would certainly be again his guest.

“ Do you then believe, said Lucy,
 “ in the softest accents, that you will be
 “ the more welcome either to my father
 “ or to me on account of any advan-
 “ tageous change in your affairs? cer-
 “ tainly no change, however advan-
 “ tageous, will add to the merit you
 “ are already possessed of.

“ I thanked her for her good opinion of
 “ me, for her uncommon, but excellent
 “ turn of mind, which naturally prompted
 “ her to endeavour to make every body
 “ as self-contented as possible ; assuring
 “ her also that, whenever I wanted con-
 “ solation, she would be the first per-
 “ son I should think of for my com-
 “ forter.

“ You will then only come to us
 “ when you are unfortunate, replied she
 “ with a languishing sweetness : If that
 “ is your intention, I ought never to
 “ wish to see you ; for I wish to see you
 “ the happiest of men.

I clasped

“I clasped her to my bosom before her
 “father, at the conclusion of this speech,
 “and told her that it would be in her
 “power alone to fix my happiness when
 “ever I dared to expect it from her.

“She blushed like scarlet; she disengaged herself from my arms, though
 “not till I had snatched a parting kiss from
 “her rosy lips, while a gentle sigh heaved
 “her tender bosom on my quitting her.

“Now tell me, Freeland, you have
 “been beloved, though perhaps never
 “a lover; tell me what I am to think of
 “this behaviour: may I not flatter
 “myself with some hopes?”

I could not hide the rising glow in my face at so home a thrust: it even prevented me from returning an immediate reply; but finding him impatient for my opinion, I told him with a smile, that had any lady been so condescending to me, I should have had vanity enough to believe I might be successful.

He laughed, shook his head at me, and told me that I should hear the result of the affair when he came back from the parsonage, to which he intended to go, as soon as his father, who had been indisposed, was recovered.

In a few days afterwards, Sir William's death was in the papers.

Mr. Ashurst could not read the paragraph without upbraiding Gertrude for having refused such a man as Blyth: she was silent.

She had been for several days unusually grave and low spirited; upon my enquiring into the cause of her melancholy appearance, she told me that Dawley followed her whithersoever she went, and had even written a letter to her with an offer of marriage; "But I
" treated it with the contempt it deserved," continued she: "Mr. Dawley
" has been talking in the same strain to
" my father; for he said yesterday that
" he

“ he was surprized at my having any
 “ objection to be Mr. Dawley’s wife,
 “ though I would not be his mistress. I
 “ replied, that I looked upon the man
 “ who could think of making me the
 “ one, as unworthy of making me the
 “ other. My father was angry, and
 “ told me that, though modesty was
 “ commendable in girls, I was too proud.
 “ I would not argue with him, Mr.
 “ Freeland, but I wish he was not pre-
 “ possessed in favour of this Dawley.”

Saville interrupted us by running
 into the room to tell me that he had
 found out Sukey’s lover. “ But if you
 “ will not swear,” continued he, “ to be
 “ secret, I shall be dumb about him ;
 “ besides, I can give you such unan-
 “ swerable reasons for secrecy, that you
 “ will, I dare say, be of my opinion
 “ when you have heard them.”

I was not much in humour to listen
 to his intelligence, being disturbed by

Gertrude's disquietudes ; but when I found he would not leave me, I assured him I would not in the least interfere between him and Miss Coker : he then informed me that the young fellow who visited her, and whose name was Bently, was a shoe-maker in Cranbourn Alley ; that he was a very industrious man in his business ; but being ambitious enough to look higher, had been for some time setting up for a fortune ; that having made several unsuccessful efforts to persuade any woman whom he thought worthy of his addresses to listen to him, he was struck at Foote's with Sukey's person, and still more with the airs she gave herself, which he found quite suitable to her rank in life, as she had actually made him believe that a rich uncle was hourly expected from Madras. " Now," continued Saville, " if this poor wrong-headed " romantic Crispin had not taken it into
" his

“ his head to pass in his turn for a man
 “ of fortune, I would, with pleasure,
 “ save him from such a ruinous alli-
 “ ance, though the old woman would,
 “ I know, be ready to cut my throat
 “ for my pains; but as he has attempt-
 “ ed to deceive, e’en let him be de-
 “ ceived: the girl will get a husband;
 “ and, if she has any decency in her,
 “ may live in a more honest and com-
 “ fortable station than she was born to.”

I could not help smiling at Saville’s idea of retaliation, by bringing these poor people together; but promised not to occasion any interruption to their proceedings. I asked him, however, how this scheme could be forwarded on the young fellow’s side, and whether Mrs. Coker and her daughter did not make some enquiries about him.

“ They have made a few,” replied he, “ but only at a house at which he
 “ gave hints that he was known; a

“taylor’s in the neighbourhood, who,
 “acting upon the same plan, assisted
 “him in lying for him lustily, well
 “knowing that he should be re-assisted
 “in a similar manner in the execution
 “of a similar design. Bently pretends
 “to lodge at this taylor’s while he is in
 “town, having a fine estate in Berk-
 “shire, where the nuptials are to be
 “consummated, if my *uncle* does not
 “arrive first from the Indies; if he
 “comes they whirl down to Wales you
 “know.”

When Saville left me I fell into a
 train of reflections on the different me-
 thods which people take to rub through
 life; and was waked from my reverie
 by the entrance of Mr. Ashurst, who
 acquainted me with the failure of a
 house at Amsterdam, with which he
 had, I knew, considerable connections.

I was exceedingly shocked at this
 disagreeable news on Gertrude’s ac-
 count.

count. I never imagined, indeed, that her father would save any thing for her; yet the certainty of such a girl's being left without a fortune, and without a friend capable, at least, of assisting her to struggle through the world, gave me the most poignant uneasiness.

I said but little to Mr. Ashurst, who walked up and down the room in the greatest agitation.

Turning at last hastily to me, "Freeland," said he, "you can save me."

"I, sir?—would I could!" replied I; "be assured that if it was in my power I would immediately."

"It is in your power, in yours alone," replied he, interrupting me, "to save me; and by so doing to repay yourself. You have so much influence over my daughter that you can persuade her to any thing. If she can but be prevailed on to marry Dawley,

“ he will, I know, gladly lay down
 “ any sum to be possessed of her ; and
 “ then I shall be able not only to dis-
 “ charge my debt to you, but to make
 “ up my affairs immediately.”

I was inexpressibly affected at hear-
 ing such a proposal ; but had presence
 of mind, however, sufficient to say,
 “ The most flattering prospects, sir,
 “ the most advantageous ones to my-
 “ self, shall never make me endeavour
 “ to prevail on Miss Ashurst to do an
 “ unjust action, by marrying a man
 “ whom she cannot love. I want not
 “ to be repaid : nay, I will advance,
 “ cheerfully advance, the small re-
 “ mainder of my fortune to save your
 “ daughter from an union which will
 “ render her future life supremely
 “ wretched.”

“ You think, then, that she would be
 “ guilty of an unjustifiable action by
 “ marrying a man every way formed to
 “ make

“ make her happy, in order to save her
 “ father from destruction? Do not her
 “ prepossessions in your favour tend to
 “ promote the ruin of us both?”

“ Heaven forbid,” cried I, “ that I
 “ should ever bring ruin upon the
 “ woman whose happiness I would
 “ freely purchase with my life.”

“ But you know, Charles,” said he,
 “ you cannot make her happy: if she is
 “ therefore the good girl I would still
 “ willingly believe her to be, she will
 “ no longer sigh after impossibilities,
 “ but consent to marry Dawley.”

I made no reply: struck with horror
 at the distress into which I saw the dar-
 ling of my heart, the most amiable
 creature in the world going to be plung-
 ed; I could not speak: to my great
 surprize I kept my temper. I never
 imagined, indeed, that she would listen
 to such a proposal, though I knew how
 exalted her sentiments were with regard
 to

to filial duty; sentiments which I had myself contributed to instill into her growing mind: but I dreaded the fatal event which would occasion so cruel a conflict in her tender bosom. I confess too that I doubted (possibly from a vain hope of preserving her for myself, an hope which I ventured not, however, to encourage) at that moment whether a daughter was not more criminal by consenting, than by refusing to prostitute herself to save her father.

After a little consideration, therefore, I endeavoured to persuade Mr. Ashurst to have patience; urging that things might possibly not be so bad as they were represented to be; and that if he would take my remaining five hundred and wait, something might turn up unexpectedly fortunate.

“No, no,” replied he, “nothing will turn up, I am well assured, in my favour. I have but one card to play,
“and

“and it shall be played: I insist upon
 “your not dissuading my daughter
 “from this match. If she is satisfied,
 “you ought to be so.”

“I certainly shall not dissuade her,
 “sir,” said I, “but as I cannot believe
 “that she will be satisfied with this
 “match, I should be glad to induce you
 “to stay a little, and not to hurry your
 “child, a child so amiable, so dutiful,
 “into an engagement which may be re-
 “membered with repentance by you
 “both, when too late: consider only,
 “consider sir, in how dreadful a situa-
 “tion your daughter will be, when tied
 “for life to a man so every way unsuit-
 “able to her. Put yourself in Miss
 “Ashurst’s place, how would you feel if
 “so tied to a woman whom you could
 “never love?”

“Love!—pshaw—nonsense,” cried
 he; “this is downright folly, what fig-
 “nifies it whether she loves him or no?”
 “she

“ she will have every thing this world
 “ can afford to gratify her pride, and
 “ may have every thing to gratify her
 “ pleasure if she chuses it : therefore I
 “ again insist upon your not dissuading
 “ her, Freeland : leave her to act as she
 “ thinks proper : the man, however valuable in other respects, who sets a
 “ child against her father, acts in a
 “ manner not to be pardoned.”

With these words he left me to reflect, with the most poignant anguish, on the misery to which he was going to doom his excellent daughter.

Saville found me overwhelmed with grief, and incapable of listening to any thing. He drew from me, however, the cause of my affliction, and then, by way of comfort, replied, “ Ashurst is
 “ both a rogue and a fool, or he would
 “ never have suffered himself to be hurt
 “ by this bankruptcy, which may not,
 “ perhaps,

“ perhaps, after all, be so great as he
“ imagines it is.”

“ I have told him so,” replied I;
“ but I cannot make him pay any at-
“ tention to me.”

In about a couple of hours Mr. Ashurst returned to the counting house, saying, “ That he had talked with his
“ daughter, and that, if I did not spoil
“ all again, he believed he might de-
“ pend upon her compliance.”

“ She is all goodness,” said I; “ but
“ will you not, therefore, in confide-
“ ration of this extraordinary sacrifice,
“ which she is ready to make, will
“ you not give her time? Mr. Saville
“ thinks with me that your affairs are
“ not so bad as you apprehend them to
“ be; and that they will, if you have
“ patience, be easily accommodated:
“ for heaven’s sake, then, sir, wait a
“ little; and as your child is prepared

“ to offer herself a victim to save you,
“ oh spare her!—spare her from the
“ commission of an action which must
“ make her in the highest degree un-
“ happy for the remainder of her life.
“ You will be concerned yourself—
“ surely you will be concerned to see
“ her end her days in sorrow ; and will
“ wish, when too late, that you had
“ not been so precipitate. Heaven,
“ who sees with how much reluctance
“ she agrees to be united to a man for
“ whom she has no regard, who can-
“ not be esteemed because he has al-
“ ready made a base attempt upon her
“ honour, and now wishes to destroy her
“ peace. That BEING, who sees that
“ she gives up all hopes of her own hap-
“ piness, in order to secure yours, will, if
“ you place a sincere trust in him, and
“ not hurry her to the altar, before
“ which there cannot possibly be a con-
“ currence between her heart and her
“ lips,

“lips, save you both; her from the
 “misery of passing her life in a man-
 “ner so abhorred by her; and you
 “from the bitter remembrance of
 “having rendered your only daughter
 “superlatively wretched.”

Here the violence of my emotions almost deprived me of my senses; I sunk down in a chair, overwhelmed by the crowd of reflections which disturbed my mind on Gertrude's account: what she actually suffered, deeply disquieted me, and I trembled to think on what she would still endure.

Mr. Ashurst, though resolved upon this cruel expedient for the reparation of his fortune, was not a man destitute of sensibility; but having always entertained the very absurd notion that daughters should never be consulted about their inclinations when they were to be disposed of in marriage; that they would be as happy with one man as another,

ther, provided he was neither old nor very disagreeable in his person; and that money would make ample amends for all deficiencies, had, consequently, no idea of the delicacy of a woman's affection; and therefore did not, at the time he determined to accelerate this marriage, look upon it in the light I did. When he saw me, however, in the condition above described, and soon afterwards heard Sally call aloud, "Help, help, for Miss is in fits," he began to be a little staggered, and wished that he had not gone so far: but yet, situated as he was, he could not recede.

He hastened to Gertrude's assistance, but I was with her before him: roused by Sally's outcry and information, I remained no longer in a lifeless condition; I flew up stairs like lightning.

I found her just recovering, in an easy chair, with Sally standing by her.

As soon as she saw me, she lifted up
her

her eyes, and cried, "Oh Mr. Freeland, "I must not, cannot see my father "wretched."

I made no reply, I was unable to speak : I took hold of her hand, pressed it, then let it go, and walked to the other end of the room, still silent : no words could describe what I felt.

Mr. Ashurst having followed me, was not long after me ; he went to his daughter, sat down by her, begged her to be pacified, told her that she would be better by and bye ; and that when her struggle was over, all would be right.

She returned no answer, but directed her languid eyes towards me, and then towards her father, who stood over her with looks of real concern for what she suffered, though he did not imagine, I actually believe, her sufferings to be then so great as they certainly were.

Fancying that the sight of me increased her sufferings, I left the room,
begging

begging her to be calm, and to consider that as she acted from so laudable a motive, she had all the reason in the world to be satisfied with herself for her compliance with her father's wishes. Heaven knows how keen were the pangs I felt on being so dreadfully necessitated to endeavour to make her as contented as possible with her determination.

When I returned to my own apartment, I threw myself across my bed, and gave a free vent to the torturing anguish of my mind.

Mr. Ashurst sent up to let me know that supper was ready ; but I desired to be excused for that night : how I spent it I cannot describe.

About eight o'clock Mr. Ashurst, who had been to see how his daughter did, knocked at my door with the same intention, and expressed much concern at my disquiet. " You know,
" Charles,

“Charles,” said he, “Gertrude could not have been yours had not this affair happened.”

“I know it but too well, sir,” said I; “if she, however, is happy, I shall be satisfied: only let me intreat you not to hurry her; give her time to compose her ruffled spirits. But I cannot talk upon this subject; I will go out of the way, if you please, ’till the affair is all over.”

“Who must look after my business in the mean time?” cried he; “you know I can’t depend upon Saville’s giddy head.”

I made no answer, and he soon afterwards left me.

When I was again alone I began to accuse myself of giving way to my grief, as it could be of no service either to me or to Gertrude; thinking, indeed, that by indulging it I might help to keep her sorrow alive and make her still more
bitterly

bitterly lament the step she was about to take: nay, I upbraided myself for my inconsistency. “What weak creatures
“are we!” thought I. “When Blyth
“made his addresses to this amiable
“girl, I even pressed her, dear as she
“was to my heart, to marry him;
“though her marriage with him would
“as certainly have crushed my fond
“hopes then, as her marriage with
“Dawley will destroy them now:
“but Blyth was a man of honour, and
“I was assured of his doing every thing
“in his power to make her happy:
“and why may not this man study to
“promote her happiness? He is un-
“doubtedly very-much in love with her,
“or he would not have agreed to pay
“down a sum for her; and though he
“may have less delicacy than Blyth,
“he has, perhaps, more passion for her;
“and will not that passion induce him
“to

“to seize every opportunity to please her?”

In this manner did I strive, but to little purpose, to calm my agitated spirits. When we met at breakfast, Gertrude's pale and dejected countenance, and the heavy weight which seemed to hang upon her eyelids did not tend to make me more easy.

Neither of us ate any thing, though we were both much intreated by Mr. Ashurst; who, finding that his intreaties were ineffectual, left us and went out.

Saville, notwithstanding his vivacity, declared that he pitied us extremely, from his soul; and muttered the words “unfeeling dog,” as he followed him out of the room.

When they were both gone I rose, uncertain what to do: whether it was best to stay and comfort her, or remove myself. I wished to say something to her to reconcile her, if possible, to her fate;

but I knew not how to begin. She also seemed at a loss for words to express what she felt.

- While I stood between the table and the door, not knowing what to do, she, with a faint voice and streaming eyes, said, "I could not act otherwise, Mr. Freeland : my father," continued she, with interrupted accents, " begged me, conjured me, to save him from shame and ruin. I could not be deaf to his distressful supplications ; I could not see the sorrow which wrung his soul unmoved : had he not spoken with the most trying tenderness to me, I should have been still able to have resisted him : had he offered to force me to marry a man against my consent I would have opposed him with all my might ; but when a father humiliates himself so far as to sue to his child for his peace and security, nature, duty, affection, all
" plead

“plead strongly for him; my heart
“melted, and I——”

She stopped here, quite overwhelmed by her tender griefs; and I am not ashamed to say that my tears flowed as fast as hers for a considerable time: recollecting, at length, however, that by accompanying her sorrow I only kept it alive, I made a violent effort to suppress my feelings, and with the greatest difficulty stifled them. I was forced to rise up and sit down two or three times before I could conquer my emotions so as to render myself intelligible.

“You cannot conceive, Mr. Free-
“land,” said she, “with what reluc-
“tance I, at last, consented: though I
“reproach myself for having been so
“loth to comply with a request so de-
“licately urged, especially as my fa-
“ther’s happiness depended upon my
“compliance in his embarrassed cir-
“cumstances. Besides, had I abso-
D 2 “lutely

“lutely refused, I should have entirely
“prevented him from discharging his
“obligations to you.”

This speech gave me an opportunity
to recover myself, and I eagerly replied,
“If you knew my heart, my dear Miss
“Ashurst, which throbs only for your
“happiness, you would be convinced
“that all apologies upon this subject
“are totally unnecessary. Be assured
“that I cannot disapprove of your de-
“termination, whatever results from it,
“as you have been entirely actuated by
“filial affection. May the almighty
“protect you upon every occasion, and
“keep every kind of unhappiness from
“you: yet I should be truly grieved
“to think that any regard to me had
“prompted you to consent, to what is
“not attended with the concurrence of
“your heart: for I would as freely lay
“down my life as my fortune to pro-
“cure your felicity. Had heaven
“blest

“blest me with a fortune, this severe
 “trial of yours had not happened:
 “however, we must not murmur at the
 “dispensations of providence; we can-
 “not, indeed, help feeling our distres-
 “ses; but we must strive to support
 “ourselves under them, with the con-
 “sciousness of having done our duty to
 “the utmost of our abilities. That, my
 “dear Miss Ashurst, will be a certain
 “consolation to us: and that is fre-
 “quently the only one which we are
 “permitted to enjoy in this world:
 “but let us also consider it as a blessing
 “of no small value, as it will, we have
 “reason to believe, ensure us felicity
 “in a future state.”

While I spoke—I wonder how I
 was capable of saying so much—her
 grief abated, and a melancholy languor
 was diffused over her countenance. She
 wiped her eyes, and lifted them up to
 me with an inexpressible sweetness. “I

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“thank you, Mr. Freeland,” said she,
 “I thank you for this kind consola-
 “tion: it has done me good. I shall
 “never forget what you have said:
 “I shall always remember the excellent
 “lessons you alone have taught me; and
 “which are my only supports at pre-
 “sent: but while I reflect, with infi-
 “nite gratitude, on my obligations, I
 “cannot forget the person to whom I
 “am so deeply indebted: and the re-
 “collection of my having been thought
 “worthy of the care of the best of
 “men will ever keep me mindful of
 “my duty; since, by a strict observance
 “of his precepts, and by the fervency
 “of my prayers for his perpetual wel-
 “fare, I can now only repay them.”

Here the different sensations rolling
 in her dear gentle bosom grew too
 powerful; and while she praised and
 thanked me for having endeavoured to
 inspire her with fortitude and resigna-
 tion,

tion, her exquisite sensibility convinced her how difficult it is to conquer a favourite passion when that passion revolts against duty : fearful, therefore, of being more tortured by farther struggles she rushed out of the room covering her face with her handkerchief ; but her sobs sufficiently discovered the wretchedness which she wished to conceal from me.

I remained rooted to the floor quite lost in thought, full of the most melancholy reflections ; and as little able, in those moments, to make use of my reason as the amiable unhappy sufferer who had just quitted me : and I know not how long I might have remained there, had not the servant ushered in Sir Thomas Blyth, who accosted me with his usual good nature.

When the first compliments between us were over, I recovered myself enough to thank him for his friendly call : “ I

“ should, indeed, have waited on you,
 “ Sir Thomas, on the late change in
 “ your situation,” said I, adding with a
 sigh which I could not restrain, “ but I
 “ have been otherwise employed.”

“ I am obliged to you, dear Free-
 “ land,” replied he, “ for thinking of
 “ me ; but I was so truly concerned for
 “ the loss of my father, which came un-
 “ expectedly on me, as he was not long
 “ ill, that I went out of town immedi-
 “ ately after the funeral, not only to
 “ avoid every thing that might renew
 “ my affliction, but to seek in the con-
 “ versation of Miss Manners, and of her
 “ father, that comfort which I despaired
 “ of meeting with in any other com-
 “ pany. To my extreme surprize,
 “ however, I was Sir Thomas’d by the
 “ worthy rector, and received by his
 “ daughter with a respectful reserve, to-
 “ tally different from that modest fami-
 “ liarity with which she before treated
 “ me ;

“ me : her distance and reserve served
 “ to increase my dejection to such a
 “ degree that she, at length, seemed to
 “ be affected by it herself ; and without
 “ lessening in the least her deference to
 “ me, strove, by numberless little atten-
 “ tions, to remove my melancholy and
 “ to raise chearful ideas in my mind.
 “ Her most obliging assiduity had the
 “ desired effect ; I recovered my spirits,
 “ and I also felt the liveliest esteem for
 “ the amiable creature who interested
 “ herself so earnestly in my happiness :
 “ and as I had before been sensible of
 “ still softer emotions for her, this be-
 “ haviour greatly increased them, and
 “ urged me to seize a thousand tender,
 “ yet innocent freedoms, when I found
 “ an opportunity ; but I was always re-
 “ pulsed, though I assure you that I
 “ made no attempt which could justly
 “ offend the most scrupulous modesty :
 “ as it was ever my opinion that a

“ strictly virtuous woman cannot de-
“ cently receive the addresses of any
“ man, however desirable, after he has
“ taken improper liberties with her—
“ yet did not Miss Manners’s opposi-
“ tion to my tenderness appear to arise
“ from any dislike or aversion : the de-
“ licacy of her carriage therefore made
“ her still more charming in my eyes ;
“ I could not help being sorry however
“ that she had discovered my situ-
“ ation in life, before I had acquainted
“ her with my sentiments.

“ While I was wishing to try the
“ force of her inclination for me, and
“ considering how I should conduct my
“ design in the most eligible manner,
“ she became uncommonly serious : an
“ unusual languor, overspread her face,
“ and she, I thought, studied to avoid
“ me, when she could do so without
“ affectation.

“ At

“ At first I took no other notice of
 “ her altered behaviour, than by de-
 “ firing her to sit with me, by
 “ asking her to walk with me in the
 “ garden or elsewhere.

“ One day she absolutely refused to go
 “ with me, and when I repeated
 “ my request, made so many trifling
 “ excuses, that I was determined to
 “ see how far she would carry the
 “ resisting humour: I seized both her
 “ hands, therefore—no body was near
 “ us—and told her, that I would take
 “ no more denials. She turned away
 “ her face, yet seemed willing, I
 “ thought, to oblige me at the same
 “ time, that she endeavoured to get
 “ from me; I held her fast, however,
 “ and asked her what I had done to her
 “ to make her so capricious. Why
 “ are you so particular averse to a
 “ walk with me to day? continued I.

“ She looked embarrassed, and strove
 “ again to break from me : finding all
 “ her efforts unsuccessful, she burst into
 “ tears.

“ You cannot imagine, Freeland,
 “ how much her tears moved me : I
 “ quitted her instantly : I was ashamed
 “ of having detained her against her
 “ will. She was going to leave the
 “ room in disorder : I caught her by
 “ the gown, and begged her to pardon
 “ me, for having undesignedly ren-
 “ dered her uneasy, in language, so
 “ strongly expressive of the sincerest
 “ repentance, that she turned hastily to-
 “ wards me, and with a look of infinite
 “ complacency, cried, Pardon ! Sir
 “ Thomas ! surely you have never
 “ done any thing to offend me.

“ Why, then, these tears ? said I,
 “ again pressing her hands in mine : sit
 “ down, Miss Manners ; and if you are
 “ not actually angry with me, if you
 “ believe

“ believe me to be, as I really am, the
 “ sincerest of your friends, you will tell
 “ me the cause of your present disquiet.

“ She made no answer, she only
 “ fetched a deep sigh; while the tears
 “ still rolled down her lovely face.

“ I threw my arm round her, clasped
 “ her close to my bosom, and tenderly
 “ said, Will you not acquaint me with
 “ the cause of this discomposure? I
 “ must then conclude that you are
 “ displeased with me: or that you think
 “ me unworthy of your confidence.

“ You do me wrong by these conclu-
 “ sions, said she, but I must not,
 continued she, after some hesitation,
 while her face glowed with blushes,
 “ listen to you. The difference be-
 “ tween us is so great—girls in my
 “ humble station ought only to converse
 “ with their equals: whenever men of
 “ superior rank take notice of them,
 “ that notice too frequently proves fatal
 “ to

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“ to their peace as well as to their reputation.

“ I hope my dear Miss Manners,”
“ said I, you do not include me among
“ those men: nor think that I either
“ would injure the character or destroy
“ the tranquility of the woman, whom
“ I so highly, for so many reasons, esteem: I would not intentionally, I
“ am sure I would not, give the slightest
“ pain to any woman: and the anxiety
“ which I now feel at your uneasiness,
“ ought to assure you that you of all
“ your sex—but I must certainly have
“ done something, though involuntarily,
“ to fill you with such apprehensions concerning me, to make you
“ afraid of me.

“ Well then, replied she, with a
“ blushing smile, as if willing to hide
“ her emotions, which hers ever increased under the mask of a cheerful
“ countenance, I am afraid of you, I
“ confess;

“ confess ; therefore do leave me, leave
“ me to myself.

“ You shall be instantly obeyed, said I,
“ rising, whatever it costs me; only dome
“ one favour before I go : tell me why
“ you are so terrified on my account ;
“ tell me why, after having, on our
“ first acquaintance, received me with
“ so much complacency and apparent
“ satisfaction, you now are so eager to
“ get rid of me. There must be some
“ reason for this cruel alteration in
“ your behaviour to me ; and if you
“ do not acquaint me with it I shall cer-
“ tainly imagine that I have entirely
“ lost the good opinion which you once,
“ I flattered myself, entertained of
“ me.

“ She was silent a considerable time ;
“ but did not withdraw her hand which
“ I had again taken.

“ Without lifting up her eyes from
“ the ground, she said, You have not lost
“ it ;

“ it; but your situation is altered.

“ When you was here before, I believed

“ you to be my equal, and——

“ She stopped, and seemed confused.

“ But now, Sir Thomas, continued

“ she, with a heavy sigh, there is such

“ an immense difference between us,

“ that—I cannot talk any more upon

“ this subject—pray don’t ask me?

“ I must ask you, replied I eagerly,

“ I must ask you why the change in my

“ circumstances affects you, as my be-

“ haviour remains unaltered. If I

“ esteem you as much as ever, why

“ should you wish to avoid me?

“ A second sigh was her only reply.

“ You really then would have been

“ more pleased had I been the person

“ I first appeared to you to be?

“ A thousand times, answered she,

“ briskly.

“ And yet, Miss Manners, said I,

“ well

“ well do I remember that you wished
 “ me, at our last parting, to be the hap-
 “ piest of men.

“ Ah, cried she, hastily, and so I
 “ do still; and you are happy I hope.

“ Is happiness only confined to
 “ rank and fortune? certainly not, re-
 “ plied I; the former is, in my estima-
 “ tion, quite unnecessary; but the lat-
 “ ter is, in a moderate degree, very
 “ desirable: because we cannot, with-
 “ out a decent competency, enjoy life;
 “ nor, to heighten the enjoyment of
 “ life, confer happiness on those who
 “ are entitled to the greatest share of our
 “ regard: and I am so far happy in
 “ the possession of a good fortune, as I
 “ flatter myself that I shall make the
 “ woman whom I love so, by raising
 “ her to the rank in life in which she so
 “ well merits to be placed; because she
 “ is wise enough to be perfectly con-
 “ tented in a less exalted one: and you
 “ will surely agree with me, that the wo-
 “ man

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“ man who loved me before she knew
“ how easy my circumstances were,
“ best deserves to partake of the agree-
“ able indulgencies arising from those
“ circumstances.

“ She changed colour several times
“ while I was speaking: as she made
“ no answer, I again asked her if she
“ was not of my opinion.

“ An affirmative, pronounced in a
“ voice scarcely to be heard, was the
“ only word I could obtain.

“ I have been long in search of a
“ constant companion, said I. I al-
“ ways intended to marry; but I shall
“ be sorry to marry a woman who
“ chooses me only for my title and for-
“ tune. I have the highest relish for
“ domestic happiness, but without mu-
“ tual affection, independent of all in-
“ terested views, it can never be in-
“ joyed: how indeed, with such views,
“ can it be expected? In you, my
amiable

“ amiable Miss Manners, I have, I
 “ flatter myself, found the blessing I
 “ have so long sighed for: at least your
 “ whole behaviour has given me leave
 “ to hope that I am not deceived, but if
 “ you will not confirm my conjectures
 “ with your lips, how shall I be certain
 “ that my eyes have not been mistaken.
 “ If they really have been mistaken, I
 “ shall be sufficiently punished for my
 “ vanity, by losing what I firmly be-
 “ lieved would fix the felicity of my
 “ future life.

“ I knew not whether I should have
 “ ceased speaking here, though I impa-
 “ tiently waited for her answer, had I
 “ not seen her turn as pale as death, and
 “ sink back into her chair without
 “ sense or motion.

“ I was excessively alarmed at the
 “ sight: I could not tell whether her
 “ affecting situation was occasioned by
 “ pleasure or by pain. I wished, how-
 “ ever,

“ ever, to restore her to motion and to
 “ sense, with my own assiduities alone,
 “ because I hoped to be better able to
 “ discover her real sentiments with
 “ regard to me.

“ I took her hands in mine and pressed
 “ them ardently to my lips: she
 “ soon recovered her senses; and, seeing
 “ me hanging over her with looks of
 “ the sincerest anxiety, cried, Is it really
 “ so, Sir Thomas? or— added she,
 “ in a fainter voice, do I dream? was
 “ you actually in earnest? can you
 “ think of marrying a girl with nothing
 “ but the truest, the tenderest esteem
 “ for your uncommon merit? this is
 “ such an unlooked for happiness— it
 “ has almost overpowered me. But do
 “ not imagine, continued she, in the
 “ softest accents, do not imagine that
 “ your rank or fortune made a conquest
 “ of my heart: it was yours, and only
 “ yours before I knew that you were
 “ Sir

“ Sir William Blyth’s son ; and I wish-
“ ed a thousand times, during your
“ first stay at our house, that I had been
“ capable of shewing my disinterested
“ prepossession in your favour.

“ Nothing more was necessary, con-
“ tinued Mr. Blyth, to convince me
“ of the sincerity of my dear girl’s affec-
“ tion, which, before we parted, I pre-
“ vailed on her to discover in its full
“ force ; she honestly confessed that she
“ was wretched as soon as her father had
“ been accidentally acquainted with my
“ connections, because she feared that
“ she should never see me again ; and
“ that she felt numberless apprehensions
“ when I returned, lest she should not
“ be able to conceal her feelings in my
“ behalf : not daring, then, to indulge
“ them, as she never could imagine that
“ I would marry a woman with no for-
“ tune, and my inferior also in point of
“ birth. My concern for the death of
“ your

“ your father, added she, joined to the
 “ pity I felt for your own affliction,
 “ increased my tenderness so much, that
 “ I did not care to trust myself alone
 “ with you, especially when you shew-
 “ ed an unusual fondness for me.

“ The worthy rector found us in this
 “ tender conversation, and looked ra-
 “ ther astonished at his coming up, to
 “ see his daughter make no resistance to
 “ my endearments: as soon as she saw
 “ him, she immediately began with
 “ blushes, to frame apologies; but I
 “ stopped her mouth with kisses. I
 “ asked her father’s consent to make
 “ her mine for ever: he gave it me
 “ with the truest joy: expressing, at the
 “ same time, a grateful sense of the ho-
 “ nour I did him as well as his daugh-
 “ ter: but telling her, with a smile, that
 “ he found she had not waited for his
 “ approbation.

“ Indeed, my dear sir, said the sweet
 “ girl,

“ girl, Sir Thomas knows that I did
 “ not consent till I was certain you
 “ could not disapprove of my conduct.

“ Her father, then, embracing her,
 “ called her his dear child, and assured
 “ me, very politely, that his good opi-
 “ nion of her was heightened by her
 “ having behaved herself in such a
 “ manner as to make so considerable a
 “ conquest.

“ I am now come to town, conclu-
 “ ded Sir Thomas, to give directions
 “ about settlements, &c. and wish,
 “ my dear Freeland, that I could
 “ see you as near being happy with the
 “ amiable Miss Ashurst.”

A deep fetched sigh partly discovered
 the anguish of my heart, and prepared
 him for my relation of Gertrude's dis-
 tress. He declared the sincerest con-
 cern at it, assuring me that he would
 have chosen a happier hour for his own
 narrative if he had known what had
 passed

passed during his absence from town. I in my turn assured him, that though I never could expect felicity myself, I should always hear of his happiness with the most unfeigned satisfaction.

Sir Thomas's little detail of his affairs at the parsonage, was indeed of some service to me; for though nothing could remove my grief, that detail served to stun it for a while. When I returned to my own reflections, I felt myself more calm though not less affected, as poor Gertrude had but one day left to prepare herself for the admission of Mr. Dawley as a lover, he being in haste to claim Mr. Ashurst's promise.

The next morning, upon his paying down the sum agreed on, Mr. Ashurst called him into the parlour to Gertrude: I knew not how she received him: I did not wish to know what reception she gave him.

While

While he was trying to make himself beloved by her, Saville very good naturedly endeavoured to draw me into chat, in order to prevent my thoughts from dwelling upon a subject, of the disagreeableness of which he wanted not to be told.

From that day Dawley's visits were regular; and, from what I could not help hearing, he behaved with propriety. I studiously avoided him, and shunned, as much as possible, the sight of Gertrude. As I could not then be of any farther service to her, my presence would have only tended to renew both her sorrow and mine; besides, the extreme dejection into which she was plunged, was really too much for me; it pained me to the soul. I learnt, however, from Miss Harvey, who was, at her request, frequently with

her, that, as she had promised to obey her father, she was determined to make the utmost efforts to obey him cheerfully. But, poor, dear girl! she strove against nature to no purpose; happiness had fled from her bosom for ever.

From one thing only, upon this trying occasion, I derived some consolation; and that was from Miss Harvey's declared esteem for her. On my saying how much satisfaction I should receive by knowing that she had so kind a friend of her own sex about her, Theodosia assured me, that she would do every thing in her power to comfort and assist her. It would have been mortifying indeed to have only the society of the Cokers: she was intimate with no people but the Harveys. Mrs. Harvey had been, for some time, in a bad state of health; and lady Frolick
was

was still abroad : so that, had not Miss Harvey staid in town, she would have found no relief from the impertinence of Mrs. Coker and her daughter, who seemed inclined to be rather troublesome, presuming on their being acquainted with Mr. Dawley.

Mr. Ashurst began now, I believe, to be rather sorry that things had gone so far; but the impatience of his temper would not permit him to defer the marriage, though he had hopes of making up his affairs without it by waiting. He, seriously, however, thought of dislodging Mrs. Coker; and accordingly, told her, that she must look out for another apartment, as he wanted the whole house to himself.

She resolutely replied, That she should not quit his house till it suited her.

He then told her, that he knew how to make her remove immediately, and should take the earliest steps to avail himself of compulsive measures if she would not go without.

As these words were delivered in a tone which sufficiently shewed him to be a man who would not be trifled with, she thought it necessary to soften matters, and, therefore, said, “ Nay, “ Mr. Ashurst, but I beseech you not “ to be so hasty : I am just on the “ point of marrying my daughter, and “ it will be the greatest hindrance imaginable to have another lodging to “ seek at such a time : you cannot, “ surely, Sir, suspect me of having “ any other design than to satisfy you “ for the trouble which affairs of this “ kind always occasion in a family. “ You are also going to dispose of a “ daughter :

“ daughter: Sukey, then, and Miss
 “ Athurst may go to church together.
 “ Mr. Dawley, you know, is our
 “ friend as well as yours: one enter-
 “ tainment and one fufs, consequent-
 “ ly, will serve for both: these things
 “ always make a bustle in a house;
 “ but people don’t marry every day:
 “ you and I are so far in the same si-
 “ tuation, as we have each of us an
 “ only child, and they are both of
 “ them going to be settled with men
 “ of fortune: two happy events, I
 “ think: and as you are, partly,
 “ obliged to me for the knowledge of
 “ Mr. Dawley, (for miss, I believe,
 “ saw him first at my rout) why, I
 “ am of opinion that you ought to
 “ have patience: our girls, I warrant,
 “ will be glad to be together, till ’tis
 “ all over.”

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“Our girls?” replied he, with a look of exquisite contempt, “I did not know, Mrs. Coker, that we had any things in common together.”

“Nay, as to the matter of that,” cried she, tossing up her head, with a laughing sneer, “I don’t know what you mean—Miss Coker is, to the full, as well as Miss Ashurst; and Mr. Bently, as Mr. Dawley: I see not the smallest degree of difference between them.”

Mr. Ashurst quitted her with a frown, which plainly indicated no concurrence in their opinions; and I heard him say to Saville, as he passed me, “What does the woman mean by her daughter and Mr. Bently?”

“Why, Sir,” replied he, with a broad grin, “the young lady is just going to be Mrs. Bently.”

A pshaw! pronounced peevishly by him, gave his informer room to suspect that his intelligence was not credited. He contented himself, however, with taking no notice of Mrs. Coker; but, by so behaving, he affronted her pride, and would have roused her resentment, if her daughter's approaching marriage had not engrossed her thoughts.

But there was still a difficulty to be surmounted; a very formidable one too.

Poor Gertrude, wretched as she was, found herself obliged to prepare bridal finery, though she went about it with as little alacrity, as if she had been going to make preparations for her funeral: the sight, however, of her gay ornaments, fired Sukey's bosom with envy, and prompted her mother to employ her fertile brain for the acquisition

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of fimilar decorations of a lefs expen-
five conftruction.

I furprifed Sukey, one day, in the
compting-houfe, ftanding before Sa-
ville, who was loling back in his
chair, with both his hands in his pock-
ets, fhaking them at her to convince
her that they were empty.

I drew back, not being willing to
interrupt them, and heard her fay,
“ Pshaw, how can you be fuch a
“ fool?”

- “ Nay, there you are quite out,
“ child,” faid he, “ fools have for-
“ tune ; and my want of money,
“ therefore, is a fure and certain fign
“ of my having an infinite deal of
“ wit.”

“ For a wit,” replied fhe, “ I ne-
“ ver heard a man talk fo much non-
“ fense in my life.”

“ What

“What I now say, Miss Sukey,” answered he, “may, perhaps, be deemed nonsensical by you, because it does not happen to fall in with your humour: but, upon my soul, I do not remember that I ever talked more sensibly; and I have, doubtless, acted like a fellow of no small sagacity, by refusing to comply with your pecuniary demands.”

“Then you really have some money, you devil you, though you will not let me have any of it?”

“Why, that’s just as you please to fancy: but you may venture to assure yourself, that I have no money for another man’s mistress.”

“Mistress! — I am astonished at your impudence! — I shall be his wife, sir, in a few days.”

“ Amen, say I,” cried Saville,
 “ and h—n blefs him with you.”

“ You are the moft provoking
 “ toad,” faid mifs, “ that ever breath-
 “ ed; but, if you won’t, I know who
 “ will: I can get any thing from Mr.
 “ Dawley.”

This laft fpeech of hers rouzed me; recollecting that the lovely virtuous Gertrude was going to be united to a man who was difpofed to fhare his fortune between her and fuch drabs, I felt fenfations painful beyond expreffion! — My condition, however, was as hopelefs as it was unhappy.

In a few days afterwards, Mifs Coker produced her cloaths, &c. &c. in a tawdry, flaunting tafte, which ſhe had purchafed with Dawley’s affiftance, I imagine.

Mr.

Mr. Ashurst, continuing to resent Mrs. Coker's putting her daughter upon a footing with Gertrude, shunned her: and, as Miss Ashurst shut herself up, as much as possible, with Miss Harvey, she could not well force herself into their company: Sukey too was exactly in the same predicament; so that she had nothing to do but to make her wedding preparations in her own way.

The fatal day now arrived, which was to tear Gertrude for ever from me.

In the morning, Mr. Ashurst appeared with his mind uncommonly agitated.

I made an excuse for confining myself to the compting-house for that day.

While I was sitting there alone, leaning my head on my hand, overwhelm-

ed with melancholy reflections, Gertrude looked in upon me—she seemed greatly fluttered.

Holding out her hand to me, she said, with a wildness in her eyes that shocked me, “God bless you, Mr. Freeland—may every kind of happiness for ever attend you!”

I started from my seat at this unexpected, this dreadful adieu: It almost shook reason from her throne. I snatched the hand which she stretched out to me, and I pressed it to my bosom, but—I could not articulate a syllable.

She gazed earnestly at me, while her eyes were suffused with tears, withdrew her hand, and said, as she hurried out of the room; “This is too much.”

As

As soon as she was out of sight, I sunk to the floor. — I know not how long I remained in a state of stupefaction.—I opened my eyes in Saville's arms.

Supporting me to a chair, he cried,
 “Nay, prithee, Freeland, try to bear
 “your disappointment like a man.”

“Would to heaven!” said I, “that
 “I lived not to feel it.”

After having given me all necessary assistance, he left me to the farther care of Sally, who stood by me with drops, as he was wanted to attend the bride and bridegroom, an honour from which I had excused myself.

Chusing to be alone, I dismissed the frightened girl; praying devoutly, at the sametime, that the almighty would put a speedy period to my existence, and crown Gertrude with never-ending felicity.

At

At length I recovered strength of mind sufficient to enable me to compose myself a little ; but I scarce knew what I said or did, during the remainder of the day.

When the ceremony had been performed, Saville returned home, but Mr. Ashurst went a day's journey with his daughter, who had desired to go immediately out of town.

The thoughtless Saville would have, directly, given me an account of the wedding, but I was incapable of attending to it : sometimes by sudden fits of frenzical mirth, sometimes by a deep melancholy, I was prevented from listening to his narrative : at last, however, I grew so eager to be informed of every particular, that he could not quiet me but by relating minutely all that had passed.

I had

I had seen the lovely victim myself, from the window, arrayed in spotless white, the emblem of her innocence, pale and trembling led to the sacrifice.

“ When she entered the church,” said Saville, “ she shook to such a degree that they were obliged to have recourse to eau-de-luce salts, &c. to keep her from fainting: yet she strove to smile and appear satisfied with what she was about to do. But, when it was over, when the plighted vows could not be recalled, she turned wildly round, and enquired aloud for her father, though he had just given her away for ever. My dear, dear father, said she, clinging about his neck, are you now pleased with your Gertrude? Yes, my dear child, replied he, returning her embrace with tears, which her affecting behaviour

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“viour drew from him, Who could be
 “dissatisfied with such a daughter? may
 “heaven bless thee my child. A flood
 “of tears from her followed this speech,
 “and she with the greatest difficulty
 “composed herself though her husband
 —Here I sighed as if my heart was bursting—
 “strove by a number of little ca-
 “resses to render her susceptible of love
 “and joy: but he exerted himself in
 “vain; at last he put her into a coach,
 “and they drove off.”

“Poor dear, dear girl!—I could pro-
 nounce no other words: nor can I
 well give an account of my subse-
 quent thoughts: my brain was in a
 troubled state, my ideas were all in
 confusion: I spent the night in per-
 turbation; my slumbers were short,
 and often interrupted, and I frequent-
 ly started out of disjointed dreams.

So

So unrefreshed, indeed, was I when I arose in the morning, that I could hardly, at the usual hour of business, attend to any thing.

Mr. Ashurst, whom I had not seen the preceding evening, came into the compting house with a gloom upon his face: yet was there mixed with it a kind of concern which I had never before observed in it. He discovered an extreme solicitude about me, though I strove to force myself to business, and gave him no reason to think that my inactivity arose from any thing but a temporary dejection, which I could not conquer.

He once or twice attempted to speak of the proceedings of the foregoing day; but the words died on his tongue, ere he could make what I wished not to hear intelligible.

Saville,

Saville, in the mean time, with his usual good nature, strove by his lively chat to turn my thoughts into another channel.

We had also much business to transact, and it was in a few days increased by the unexpected news of the arrival of one of Mr. Ashurst's ship, supposed to have been lost. The same ship brought him advice of the death of a distant relation at Lisbon, who had left him five thousand pounds.

We were all in the compting-house together, when this news arrived.

He changed colour : laid down the letter, and cried softly, " Oh my child ! " then turning to me, " Freeland," continued he, " would I had taken your advice, would I had not been so precipitate ! "

I made

I made no answer. I could not reproach a man, who, I saw plainly, felt the keenest stings of remorse torturing his breast.

He left us : when he was gone, Saville said, " Ay now you feel, do you ? it is
" come home to you at last."

" Be not so severe Saville," replied I,
" nor wish to make any addition to the
" greatest of all human miseries, the
" consciousness of having brought our
" miseries on ourselves."

" Why now, can you be such a
" stoic," cried he, " as not to be plea-
" sed to see this man punished for his
" cruelty, in over-persuading so amiable
" a girl as Gertrude, to marry in oppo-
" sition to her inclination, only to put
" a little money into his pocket, to
" supply his extravagances ? when you
" are distractedly in love with her at
" the same time too !"

“ I have, then, the more reason to be
 “ pleased,” said I, “ that any good for-
 “ tune has happened to her family : as
 “ to Mr. Athurst, he already, if I am
 “ not greatly mistaken, sincerely re-
 “ pents of what he has done, and I
 “ should exceed him in cruelty were I
 “ capable of rejoicing in his distress.
 “ Besides, is he not the father of the
 “ most excellent of women ? can I wish
 “ to see any person related to her
 “ wretched ?”

“ Well, I believe you are right,” re-
 plied he, “ but I know if he had served
 “ me so, I should have been strongly
 “ tempted to have him run through the
 “ body on that same day.”

Soon after the above dialogue be-
 tween us, I received the following let-
 ter by the penny post. As the address
 was in a hand with which I was quite

un-

unacquainted, and as I had very few correspondents, I first cast my eye at the bottom, and with surprize saw the name of a person whom I knew to be at that time with Gertrude. The contents were still more astonishing.

To Mr. Freeland.

“ You will, I imagine sir, be not a little surprized at receiving a letter from me, and I am not less so at myself when I consider how much I lay myself open to censure by such a proceeding. Were I to address any other man in the world, I should believe that I really deserved reproof; but from Mr. Freeland’s excellent and uncommon way of thinking, I am encouraged to take this irregular step, being well assured that should he disapprove of it, he will be candid enough to impute it to the impression
which

which his extraordinary virtues have made on me, and not to the momentary flight of a capricious disposition. If your amiable diffidence, which renders you blind to your own merit, would suffer you to be conscious of those attractions which cannot be overlooked by any woman, you would immediately pardon the liberty, I had almost said presumptuous liberty, I have taken with you, in offering you what is not, I am sensible, adequate to your intrinsic worth, my fortune and my hand.

“ I have long esteemed you, Mr. Free-land; long preferred you to every man whom I have yet met with : but as I was no stranger to your inclination for Mrs. Dawley, I dared not to discover my esteem for you, in the particular manner I do at present, till I knew that you could not, possibly, be happily united
to

to her, for several reasons too obvious to be mentioned.

“ I am not to be told that your heart is, at present, too warmly attached to that amiable woman to think of any other so immediately after her marriage ; but time will, I doubt not, reconcile you to what is irremediable, and convince you that no body is more sincerely your friend than

Theodosia Harvey.”

“ P.S. I am still at Mr. Dawley’s in Hampshire, where I shall expect an answer, but beg you would convey it sealed up to my mother, who will send it to me, inclosed in a packet which Mr. Dawley’s servant is to bring down in a day or two : the same person carried this in the same manner to town. I don’t chuse to trust the post, though I know I can depend upon your honour.”

I read

I read this letter over twice before I could tell whether I was awake or not. at first was induced to think that the late commotion in my mind had disturbed my intellects: but at length I found that there was no room to question the reality of what lay before me. The point was how to answer the lady's epistle without wounding her delicacy; and how to return an absolute refusal in the least offensive manner: my head and my heart were both in a very unquiet situation; however, as no delay was allowed, I found myself under a necessity of being expeditious, and therefore penned the following reply.

To Miss Harvey.

“I am so confounded, madam, at receiving so unexpected so unmerited a letter from you, that I am quite at a loss to express my sense of the honour you
have

have done me by it: but I am at the same time necessitated, in consequence of a firm resolution, to act always with the strictest integrity, to refuse a favour which would render many men completely happy.

“ As this refusal, however rude and harsh it may seem, arises entirely from my consciousness of never being able to deserve so generous a condescension from you it will, I hope, meet with your pardon; especially when I assure you, that I shall ever remember with gratitude the several passages in your letter highly flattering to the vanity of,

Your most obliged

humble servant,

CHARLES FREELAND”.

I sealed this and carried it, as directed, to Mrs. Harvey, who received me with

great civility, told me she would take care of it, and gave me a general invitation to her house, of which invitation I was, however, little in a humour to accept. Nothing, indeed, gave me any sort of satisfaction: I was wretched, and my wretchedness could not possibly be relieved. Mr. Ashurst too, instead of being elated with his unexpected good fortune, seemed to be more depressed than ever I had seen him.

In a few days he was thrown into a still worse state by the receipt of a letter from Miss Harvey, which informed him that his daughter was extremely ill of a fever and thought to be in danger.

This was a stroke for which he was quite unprepared, and which he was utterly unable to support. He exclaimed against himself with a bitterness of sorrow I never expected him capable of feeling;

feeling ; and immediately set out to Mr. Dawley's, but was seized on the road with a fever also.

Finding himself, very soon, not in a condition to proceed, he ordered John, who attended him, to ride on with the utmost haste, and inform Mr. Dawley of his being obliged to stay at an inn upon the road, and of his intending to pursue his journey as soon as possible : ordering him at the same time to desire Mr. Dawley not to alarm Gertrude too suddenly with the news.

Dawley returned with John to see him, but made him only a short visit, and gave him no hopes of his daughter's recovery.

Mr. Ashurst was half distracted at the hearing of such melancholy news, and sent to town for me.

Not being in a more composed state

of mind than himself, the sight of him not in the least contribute to make me better.

I found him in bed at the inn; he complained of a racking pain in his head: "But yet, Freeland," continued he, seizing my hand and putting it to his breast, "here, here is the greatest misery I endure: I have destroyed Gertrude: I have killed my poor girl who never did me any harm, nay, who gave herself up to wretchedness to save me, unworthy criminal as I am, from ruin."

"Is she then dead?" said I, with a deep sigh, while my heart was ready to burst asunder.

"Dead!" cried he, starting up and looking wildly, "Who talked of death? he is not here;" then added, in more composed accents, "If I had staid,
Charles;

“ Charles; if I had taken your friendly
 “ advice, all might have been well: I
 “ was too precipitate — I have ruined
 “ my poor Gertrude, dear, much injur-
 “ ed, dear girl.”

I sat motionless by his side, weeping
 like a child: while I was in that situ-
 ation, John came in and said to me,
 “ My young lady is not dead, sir, we
 “ hope she will get over it.”

This attempt of the honest fellow to
 comfort me had the desired effect. As
 soon as I was assured that Gertrude was
 really alive, I wished to live also for her
 sake; and for her sake too I employed
 myself in administering consolation to
 Mr. Ashurst: but that was a task be-
 yond my abilities; he was past all con-
 solation; his fever raged with greater
 violence; and his delirium once rose to
 such a height that he endeavoured to put

a period to his existence with his own hands.

When he grew a little calm, on being prevented from rushing into the presence of his maker unsummoned, and on being reasoned with about the impiety of suicide, he looked earnestly at me, for I scarce ever left him, and said, “Free-
“land, is it you?—my good young
“man, my best friend—the friend of
“my poor undone, but innocent child,
“whom I have ruined—Yet they say she
“is not dead—if she lives she may
“want a friend; for I am afraid——I
“am afraid she will meet with foul
“play: no matter for that, you will
“protect her, Freeland, for she loves
“you; and she will then be safe when
“I am dead; that’s my comfort: I
“leave her in good hands after all.”

In this manner he rambled, continuing

ning sometimes a little better, sometimes worse, for fifteen days, during which I gave him almost every thing he took, and sat up with him every night.

He was attended by two eminent physicians, one of them lived in the neighbourhood of the place where he was taken ill; the other came from London.

John went every day to enquire after Mrs. Dawley's health, and informed us on his return that she mended, though very slowly.

Of the good news which we from time to time heard, we endeavoured to make him sensible in his lucid intervals; he seemed to listen to what we said, and to know that we were talking about his daughter, yet appeared not to receive the least comfort from our

communications: on the contrary, he spent all his wretched hours in accusing himself of having caused her illness and her death. “Why, why, did I force
 “her,” cried he, with his eyes earnestly lifted up in a terrifying manner, “why
 “did I oblige her to leave me?—to
 “marry—ay, there was the mischief—
 “If I had done as Freeland would have
 “had me, she would have been now not
 “only alive but happy. But has she
 “heard of the money which Mr. Cook-
 “son left me? And so she died out of
 “pure vexation, because I would not
 “wait for it?—then why should I live
 “to please any body? why may I not
 “follow my poor girl?”

Having in his frantic moments made several attempts, by laying hold on every thing near him, to destroy his life, he at last endeavoured to strangle himself

himself with his hands ; so that there was a necessity for their being tied down.

Gertrude growing better, became so very uneasy at not hearing from her father, that his dreadful situation could no longer be concealed from her : and when she had been acquainted with it, she could not be prevailed on to remain at a distance from him, though both Mr. Dawley and Miss Harvey made use of all their eloquence to dissuade her from the journey while he lay in so melancholy a state, or to stay, at least, till her health was more firmly established.

Protesting however that nothing on earth should keep her from her father, she got into the post chaise, accompanied by Miss Harvey, Mr. Dawley not chusing to be present at so afflicting an interview.

Afflicting it was, indeed ; it will never be erased from my memory, never."

Mr. Ashurst, having raved all night to a degree beyond conception, seemed to have exhausted all his strength: being blest with a return of his reason, he begged me so earnestly to untie his hands that I could not refuse his request. Having made violent efforts during the night to get out of bed, he had occasioned painful sensations in his wrists. While I was rubbing one of them gently, which I held in mine, in hopes of making it feel more easy to him, Gertrude entered the chamber, supported by Miss Harvey : but how unlike — how very unlike the Gertrude she was before cankering sorrow had nipped her rosy bloom, before wasting grief had withered all

all the graces of youth in her beauteous face !

She was pale and languid, and scarce able to move her feeble limbs.

At sight of me a faint gleam of satisfaction appeared in her dejected countenance ; but, as soon as she beheld her father, terror and grief took possession of her features.

The moment he saw her he started up, stared at her, and then cried, “ It is
 “ she, it is my child— no it cannot be,
 “ for she is dead ; it is only her spirit
 “ which haunts me for the cruel injuries
 “ I have done her : save me, O save me,
 “ Freeland, I will not speak to it,” continued he, striving to hide his head under the bed cloaths, while the dear distressed girl, hastening to him and throwing herself on her knees by the bedside, said,
 “ Oh, my father, my dear, dear father,
 look

“look on your child, your Gertrude—
“oh, do not leave me, do not die
“till you have blest your daughter.”

Sighs, sobs, and streaming tears prevented any farther utterance. Her head sunk on the bed, and she hid her face with her hands.

I had risen directly upon her entrance, though hardly knowing what I did, to give her my seat; but, after so pathetic an exclamation I could hold out no longer.

Turning from them all, I burst into tears.

Miss Harvey, though somewhat disconcerted at first seeing me, perceiving Mr. Ashhurst start up again, called out to me for help.

He had seized Gertrude, apparently with an intention to destroy her.

I flew

I flew to snatch her from his grasp, and John, luckily coming in at that moment, held him while I led her trembling to a distant chair, and intreated her not to trust herself with a man who was rendered, by his distemper, incapable of acting like a rational being.

“Alas!” cried she, with a voice scarcely to be heard, “I cannot be
 “more wretched than I am: but let
 “not our misfortunes, Mr. Freeland,
 “distress you so much; leave an un-
 “happy father, and his more unhappy
 “child; leave us, and go to some
 “place where chearfuller scenes may
 “dispell the sorrows which, but for
 “us, you never would have known:
 “and be assured that I shall ever,
 “though removed from you, retain a
 “grateful

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“grateful sense of your regard for my
“poor dear father.”

I answered her only by sitting down again by Mr. Ashurst, whose strength began to fail him.

After having rolled about his eyes for some time, he fixed them on his daughter, who, immediately advancing towards him, threw herself again on her knees near him.

Looking first at me and then at her, he said, in a faint, hollow voice, “Are you not Gertrude?”

“Yes, my dear Sir,” replied she, “I am your Gertrude, your daughter, come to see you.”

“I thought she had been sick; nay,
“I once thought that she was dead.—
“She looks very pale—but now I re-
“collect me:—ay—ay—and yet I
“must not shock her: I was greatly
“to

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“to blame tho’—was I not Freeland?
“you must not be angry with him,
“my dear: he all along told me how
“it would be: he said and did all he
“could to save thee:—think of this,
“Gertrude, and then you will forgive
“your dying father.”

“Forgive you, Sir!” cried the poor creature, ready to expire with the different sensations which shook her tender frame, “Can you possibly suppose me capable of being offended
“with a father whom I love and revere? No, my dear Sir, on the
“contrary, I come with the sincerest
“affection and duty to do every thing
“to comfort and assist you, and only
“beg your blessing in return.”

“Bless thee, my girl!” said he,
“’tis not in my power to bless thee
“more; but I will intreat Heaven,
“if

“ if the prayer of fuch a wretch as I
“ am can reach the throne of mercy,
“ to blefs thee for ever.”

He then grew fo faint that, imagining he haftened to his end, and fearing that the fight of him, in his laft moments, fhould double Gertrude’s diftrefs, I begged her and Mifs Harvey, to whom I particularly directed my request, to retire to another room, that Mr. Afhurft might have time to compofe himfelf.

The latter underftood the meaning of thofe few words, which the former, through the extremity of her grief, feemed not to comprehend.

Theodofia, therefore, taking her by the arm, led her into the next room, to which ſhe went with the greateft reluctance. As ſoon as ſhe entered it, being quite overpowered by the various
emotions

emotions under which she laboured, and not perfectly recovered from her late illness, she fainted away.

Miss Harvey, terrified, called for help. I flew to her assistance, but our joint endeavours to restore her to life were for a long time ineffectual: and, indeed, I began to fear that her soul had taken its flight never to return. I cannot express what I felt at such a harrowing sight: I almost forgot that she was married, almost forgot every thing, but her most compassionate condition. Yet, though I never had taken any improper freedoms in those moments when I was not surrounded with unhappiness and horror, I could not see the only woman on earth who was dear to me ready to expire, without offering all the assistance to her in my power.

I was,

I was, however, so agitated that I knew not very well what I was about.

Having seated myself by her, and taken her hand in mine to endeavour to bring her to herself, she opened her eyes; at that instant Dawley entered the room.

He lowered at her with a look of indifference, which I could not have expected from a man who had been so eager to get her into his possession; (such a woman as Gertrude too) and then scouling at me, as if he thought that I had no business with his wife, said, with a sort of contemptuous sneer to her, without making the slightest effort to assist her, "What! have you been sick?"

"Yes, Sir," replied I, shocked at his coolness to such an angel; "Yes,

"Sir:

“ Sir: she has been a great while in a
“ swoon, into which she was thrown
“ by her concern for her father.”

“ Oh! aye,” cried he, “ he is
“ very bad is he? Well, come; (at
the same time scarce looking at her)
“ are you ready to go home?” “ No,
“ Sir,” replied she, “ my father has
“ but a short time to live, and I can-
“ not leave him.”

“ But I cannot stay here,” said he,
“ and shall not go home without you:
“ therefore you must go.”

“ Good Heaven!” thought I, ready
to burst with grief, “ Is it possible
“ for any man to make use of such
“ expressions to so lovely a creature?”

With a heavy sigh, with streaming
eyes, she intreated him only to let
her pay her last duty to her father.

He

He made her no answer, but turning to Miss Harvey, chatted with her upon the most insignificant subjects.

I left them in order to go back to Mr. Ashurst. He was become, though much weaker, much more rational. He expressed some satisfaction at having seen his daughter, but most bitterly inveighed against himself for having occasioned a marriage so contrary to her inclination, and again lamented his precipitate proceedings: "By hurrying my daughter" said he, "into a marriage, which could not but be attended with unhappy consequences, and by putting no trust in providence, who would have, I humbly hope, by relieving my wants, prevented me from sacrificing my child, if I had waited with patience, I
" have

“have been guilty of two capital
 “crimes, for which I do not deserve
 “forgiveness. I am now going to a
 “place where no more mercy may
 “be shewn me than I have shewn my
 “daughter.”

Before I could say any thing to comfort him, he fell into a doze; during which Miss Harvey came into the room, and told me that she had persuaded Mr. Dawley to let Mrs. Dawley stay to see how her father was.

I answered that I should be always glad to have Mrs. Dawley made easy, but that I feared the sight of her father, in his last moments, would affect her too much. “If
 “you can prevail on her,” continued I, “to remain in the next room, it
 “will be a great deal better, till all
 “is

“is over, as she cannot be of any
 “service to her father. You may
 “assure her that I will not leave him,
 “but that I will see every thing
 “done which is proper for him.”

Miss Harvey told her what I said.

She thanked me, and agreed to do
 as I would have her; she only begged
 that she might be sent for if
 her father on waking was sensible,
 and desired to see her.

I sat by him near an hour. He appeared tolerably easy, but fetched his breath very short.

On looking at him closely, I thought I observed a great change in him: I was not not mistaken. He waked rather in a kind of flurry.

Seeing me near him, he lifted up his eyes, already heavy, as his dissolution approached, and asked me to
 give

give him my hand. I gave it him,
and he pressed it with all his re-
maining strength. "I am just going,
"Freeland," said he, "and all my
"comfort is, that you are with me.
"Your kind attendance on me con-
"vinces me that I am forgiven by
"you. You have behaved to me like
"a son; and you would have been
"my son had I not seen things in a
"false light: but I cannot recall what
"is past. When you see Gertrude,
"endeavour to alleviate her sorrow;
"for she is, like you, too good to
"be insensible of my sufferings. I
"deserve, indeed, my children, all
"your compassion. The man who
"smarts severely, for the errors of his
"conduct in life, is truly to be pi-
"tied: and as Heaven has mercifully
"permitted me to live to repent of
"my

“ my folly, I hope, with the most humiliated heart, to be saved from perdition.”

A convulsive motion hindered him from uttering another word ; and, while I was considering whether it would be prudent to send for Gertrude, he expired in my arms.

When I was in a condition to reflect calmly, indeed, I was not sorry that she had been spared a fight which might have proved fatal to her ; and I silenced those who were in the room with me, till I could think of the most eligible manner of making her acquainted with an event which, though hourly expected, would I knew very much shock her whenever it happened. At last I looked upon Miss Harvey as the properest person to break the melancholy news

to

to her, as I could not, by the communication of it myself, do Gertrude any good: nay, I was rather inclined to believe that such mournful intelligence coming from me, just at that time, might increase the anguish of her heart, already too severely racked by disappointment and distress: besides, I perceived that Mr. Dawley was not pleased with my being so near his wife: and I was afraid that, being no stranger to our former attachment, he might, either from real or counterfeited jealousy, take advantage of my having conversed with her, and shew his displeasure against her by some very unkind, if not cruel procedures. So truly did I love her, that I would have kept even the shadow of disquiet from her: I would have suffered any thing, every thing

to guard her tender heart against the intrusion of pain.

To Miss Harvey, therefore, I addressed myself, and intreated her to make Gertrude as easy as possible: “Tell her,” said I, “that her father
“had the best advice, and all necessary assistance: tell her that nothing
“was omitted that could in any way
“give him comfort; and assure her
“also, that I will stay and attend
“the funeral, if she will permit me
“to undertake the care of it.”

In about half an hour Miss Harvey returned, and told me that Mrs. Dawley had received the news of her father's death in a manner which gave her reason to believe she would not easily conquer the affliction it had occasioned; having accused herself of being the cause of it, though very unjustly,

as

as it was certainly forwarded by the remorse and concern which he felt for having hurried her into a marriage with Dawley. "When she had defired me to thank you," continued Theodosia, "for the many proofs of your friendship for her and her family, she said, that you would increase the obligations she was under to you, by paying the last melancholy duties to her deceased parent, as she had no relation, no friends (you and myself excepted) to perform so unwelcome a part."

I begged her to assure Mrs. Dawley that I should be sufficiently animated to obey all her commands, as soon as she was capable of making me acquainted with them, by the true regard I had for her, and for my late unfortunate sister.

Miss Harvey then desired me to leave the melancholy room, and to come and take some refreshment with her and Mrs. Dawley before they left the inn.

I thanked her for her care of me; but told her, in confidence, that I dared not to trust myself with Mrs. Dawley in her afflicted situation, and intreated her, by all the favour she had shewn me, to exert her utmost endeavours to comfort her weeping friend, "She will, I hope," continued I, "in time, and by her own judicious reflections, get the better of this shock, which she had all the reason in the world to expect: she will, I hope, too, be entirely resigned to her fate, and live to see many happy days."

Miss

Miss Harvey then informed me that they should set out as soon as the horses could be put to the chaise.

I bade her adieu, and gave myself up to the mournful ideas which crowded into my mind.

The day after that on which they left me, Mr. Dawley, who had rode post to London, arrived at the inn with Saville, whom he had brought down with him to stay with me.

As Mr. Ashurst died without having made a will, his daughter, of course, inherited every thing he left. Mr. Dawley desired me and Saville to remain in his house till his affairs could be settled, which he wished me to undertake for him, as he was totally unacquainted with mercantile business; assuring me, that the fifteen hundred pounds which Mr. Ashurst

had borrowed of me should be paid with all possible expedition. He also desired Saville and me to accept of rings and mourning. The latter piece of civility was immediately ordered for us.

We attended the corps to town as mourners. I was indeed, a real one, but Saville expressed himself in very illiberal terms on Mr. Ashurst's death: I silenced him, however, by telling him that I would hear no reflections on the father of Gertrude, as she had, herself, forgiven him: adding, that as he repented of his folly and rashness before he died, his memory ought not to be insulted.

Saville, finding that he could not make me execrate the man from whom I derived all the misery of my life, was silent, and, when we came
to

to town, pursued his pleasures without any molestation, during the short time we were together, while I applied myself closely to settle every thing in the best manner I could, though my sorrows frequently interrupted me in the midst of my employment.

Saville, in my moments of dejection, exerted himself to amuse me: Mrs. Coker, who had Mr. Dawley's leave to remain in the house till the next quarter day, furnished him with perpetual matter for mirth. The mother and daughter, being equally afraid that some unlucky discovery should put a stop to the matrimonial proceedings, did every thing in their power to forward the preparation: so much eagerness, indeed, did they discover upon the occasion, that it was astonishing the poor fellow had no suspicions

concerning them; but being intent upon playing his own part to advantage, he had no leisure to be inquisitive about their affairs.

To keep him still more in the dark, and to quicken his movements, Mrs. Coker, hearing of the arrival of a ship from Bengal, produced a letter from her brother, who was, she said, left well at St. Helena, and would be in England about Christmas, wind and weather permitting.

On the strength of that letter, she made a merit of not keeping him in suspense for so long a time, and fairly offered to make him happy with her daughter as soon as he pleased, being well assured that her brother would approve of him.

Bently, who was as vain as any man could possibly be, fell at once
into

into the snare laid for him: the apparent generosity of Mrs. Coker's behaviour, duped him completely, and the so much wished for day, on both sides, was fixed.

The intended bridegroom, beginning to fear that they should smother his having no estate in Berkshire, nor any where else, proposed staying at his lodgings in town, till his Sukey's uncle arrived, every thing being agreed to, instead of postponing the wedding, which would admit of no delay.

They proceeded to the parish church, attended only by the gentleman and lady who had so early disturbed Mrs. and Miss Coker on the rout-evening. They had never seen the bridegroom before, but Mrs. Coker chose to have them present, to give

away her daughter, and to figure a creditable witneffes.

Saville also invited himself to the wedding: his rank in life, and his genteel appearance, precluded a refusal, otherwise his company might have been spared on many accounts.

A hackney coach carried the family from the Hay-Market to meet them at church.

Mrs. Coker was dressed as youthful as possible, and Sukey was tricked out in all the tawdry tinsel of second hand finery: they were conducted to their hack by Saville, who followed them into it, and Bently brought up the rear.

Nothing remarkable appeared during the ceremony, but the alacrity with which the unblushing bride performed her part of it, and the extreme
attention

attention with which Mrs. Brooks (Mrs. Coker's friend) observed Mr. Bently.

Bently was not a little disconcerted: he was thrown into a confusion which might have been rather expected in the young lady's countenance; but she was so far from being low spirited or embarrassed, that she seemed the most satisfied and joyous person in the groupe: and by her arch looks, loud laughs, and lively expressions, shewed, that neither her modesty, nor her timidity were in the least shocked on so delicate an occasion.

Saville, who related the above anecdotes, almost in the very words I have made use of, declared, that he helped her out where he thought she was at a loss: though she took suf-

ficient pains to let her husband see that she was a knowing one.

As for him, he strove, with no small assiduity, to avoid the penetrating glances of Mrs. Brooks, who kept her suspicions to herself, till the evening.

After having supped at the tavern at which they had dined, Mr. Bentley, for want of something to say, talked of going home.

Mr. Brooks said, that as they both lived in the same neighbourhood, one coach would be sufficient.

The bride and bridegroom having assented to Mr. Brooks's proposal, Saville was obliged to take care of mother Coker, whom he heartily cursed for being left with him, to spoil the diversion he thought to have had, by making an excuse to go the same way.

way with them. However, finding himself in a situation not to be remedied, he had the address to invite himself to breakfast with them the next morning: being determined to let the new-married lady into the secret, relating to her husband's family, as soon as he could.

Accordingly, he hurried to the taylor's, and found them just risen. After the usual salutations of the morning, he turned to the bridegroom, and said with that easy air which gave a spirit to every thing he uttered, "I made the more haste hither this morning, Mr. Bentley, that I might catch you at home before you went to your shop; as I have a mind to be measured for two pair of shoes."

It will not be very easy to describe Mrs. Bently's looks and attitude on
this

this unexpected address to her husband.

She opened her eyes wider than usual, and leaning forward till she was just ready to tip out of her chair, repeated the word shop, with an emphasis which plainly discovered the contempt she felt, both for a person mean enough to have the slightest connections with such a place, as well as for Saville's attempting to ridicule her upon such a subject: asking him, at the same time, if he was awake; if he had not slept his senses away.

"You will be convinced," said he, with a sneer, "that I am perfectly awake, and tolerably in my senses, when your husband goes to his work."

"What

“What does the wretch mean?” replied she, with an insolent toss of her head.

The poor shoe-maker plainly saw that he was discovered; but thinking, as he had made sure of the girl, and consequently her fortune, the sooner she knew of his occupation the better: especially as there was somebody to stand by him, for his lady appeared to him rather in a formidable light: thinking also, that as Saville talked of being a customer, he might, perhaps, prove a friend, he plucked up all the courage he was master of, and, scratching his head, cried, “Well, my dear, “since it must out, why the gentleman, to be sure, has guessed it, and “you may as well know it now as “another time.”

“What

“What the devil am I to know?”
said she, with an uncommon acute-
ness in her voice.

“That—that—”

“Ay, out with it,” said Saville,
seeing him stand hesitating, and still
rubbing his head, as if he was afraid
of her, “Out with it man, boldly;
“never mince the matter: a shoe-
“maker’s wife is as good, at any time,
“as a bed-maker’s daughter.”

“Confusion!” replied the lady,
siring at the mortifying sounds.
“Why, surely you have not married
“me to such a fellow?”

“I married you!” said he, “not
“I faith: it is all your own handy
“work: I have not had so much
“as a finger in it.”

“What! and is she not a lady,
“then? and has she not a fortune
“neither?”

“neither?” cried the poor astonished crispin.

“No, you mean-spirited villain
“you,” said she, flying at him. “Let
“me go, you devil,” continued she
to Saville, who held her.—“And is
“there no uncle at St. Helena nei-
“ther?” added the dismal dupe, who,
notwithstanding his fright, began to
see how things went.

“No, no, you low-life rascal,”
replied the enraged bride, “I have,
“thank God, no uncle for you to
“plunder: no money, not a farthing;
“you poor, deluded, sneaking sim-
“pleton: but since you would have
“a wife with a fortune, and be hang-
“ed to you, I will make you keep
“me as handsomely as if I had
“brought you thousands. Yes, you
“paltry, good for nothing wretch,
“I’ll

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“ I’ll cure you of acting the gentle-
 “ man. I’ll have every shilling you
 “ work hard for upon your contemp-
 “ tible board, you conceited sapkull.
 “ And when I have spent all your mo-
 “ ney in dressing and living to the
 “ utmost, I will spurn you from me
 “ with as much disdain as I do this,”
 (taking off her wedding ring, and
 tossing it at him) “ which is, I sup-
 “ pose, as much a counterfeit as your-
 “ self. Oh! I could tear myself to
 “ pieces for being so fooled, so—
 “ I shall run mad with shame.”

Here a fainting fit, a real or
 a pretended one, put a stop to her
 passionate effusions.

Saville, coolly picking up the ring,
 asked Mr. Bently why he did not
 go and assist his wife.

“ Assist

“Assist her?” cried he, “the devil
 “himself may assist her, if he pleases:
 “I don’t desire to have any thing
 “to do with her; not I: I shall go
 “to my business, and leave her to
 “come to herself.”

“Well, but,” said Saville, “you
 “know she is actually your wife;
 “and a good pretty girl: you must
 “make allowance for the condition
 “into which she has been thrown by
 “the discovery of the trick you have
 “put upon her: you know, that if
 “she has made you believe she had
 “a large fortune, you have also very
 “much imposed upon her: therefore,
 “as you have both endeavoured to de-
 “ceive each other, you must take
 “the consequences: quarrelling toge-
 “ther will never mend things: let
 “me advise you, then, to kiss and be
 “friends;

“ friends ; and be particularly careful
 “ of your wedding-ring,” added he
 softly to Mrs. Bently ; “ you may,
 “ possibly, find sooner than you think
 “ for, that ’tis better to be married,
 “ even to a cobbler, than to have no
 “ husband at all.”

“ Devil, devil,” cried she, foam-
 ing with passion, “ is this your way
 “ of comforting me ?”

In the midst of this uproar, Mrs.
 Coker and Mrs. Brooks made their
 appearance:—but I cannot pretend
 to do justice to the scene exhibited af-
 terwards, in a description of it.

The bride thought it both decent
 and proper to fall into a second fit.

While Mrs. Coker and Mrs. Brooks
 ran to her, the former cried, “ Heaven
 “ defend me ! what ails my poor
 “ child ?”

“ Oh !

“ Oh! my dear mother,” bawled out the fainting Mrs. Bently, “ I am
“ ruined and undone: that wretch
“ there,” (pointing to her husband)
“ whom we took to be a gentleman,
“ has deceived us, and proves to
“ be—I cannot go on——”

“ What does she say, Mr. Saville?”
cried her mother.

“ The gentleman proves to be a
“ shoe-maker in Cranbourn-Alley;
“ that’s all, madam.”

“ A shoe-maker!” said Mrs. Coker,
“ and in an alley; an alley too? Hor-
“ rid.”

“ Ah! horrid indeed,” replied her
daughter; “ but though I am married,
“ I will never go home with him:
“ I will be divorced and live with you,
“ madam.”

Mrs.

Mrs. Coker, however, not relishing the divorce scheme agreeably to her daughter's expectation, for some private reasons, said, "Live with me, child! no, no, as you are now married, you must e'en live with your husband."

"Right, madam," answered Saville, "husband and wife should never be separated."

"You cannot expect, child," continued Mrs. Croker, "that I should keep you now you are married."

"No, madam," said Mr. Bently, who had a little recovered his spirits, interrupting her, "Your brother at St. Helena can keep her: there is no occasion for you or me to be troubled with her, whilst she has so rich an uncle."

This

This home thrust rather disconcerted Mrs. Coker; but, after a short pause, she parried it by replying, "Well, well, if she has not an uncle able to give her a fortune, she will have all that is mine, and that is a great deal too much for a poor, low fellow, with nothing but a mean trade to support him. My daughter, I assure you, Mr. Bently, has been educated quite in another manner: few women have been brought up better; she is fit company, though I say so, for people of the first quality: and 'tis very mortifying for such a girl to live at a shop, married to a working tradesman, a dirty mechanick."

The reproachful terms with which she concluded her speech, served to
rouze

rouze Bently more than any thing that had yet been said; and he swore lustily, that if his wife did not go home with him to his shop, and behave herself decently, he would leave her for her mother to keep, or any body else, who chose to maintain her.

Bently, when he had uttered the last word, looked very significantly at Saville, who used his best endeavours to persuade the bride to go home peaceably, with her husband, and to mind the main chance: telling her, that she ought to be thankful for being married to a man in so good a way of business; adding, that if she made a dutiful wife, she would have no reason, he believed, to find fault with Mr. Bently.

He,

He then kicked out his foot to be measured for half a dozen pair of shoes, and said, at the same time, that he loved to encourage industrious new-married people.

After having been much mortified, and after having shed many tears, the late Miss Sukey Coker was prevailed on to take up her abode in Cranbourn-Alley.

Mrs. Brooks, going down stairs with Mrs. Coker, told her, that she thought she knew Mr. Bently the moment she saw him, but could not recollect where she had seen him; but that all on a sudden she remembered she had bought a pair of green everlasting shoes at his shop: "As soon as I set eyes upon him at church," continued she, "I could not for the life of me get the shoemaker out of my

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“ head: though I was far from thinking it possible that he could be the man who fold me my shoes.”

There is no saying when she would have stopped, had not Mrs. Coker hastily interrupted her, by saying, “ I am surprized to the greatest degree at what you have told me, and still more so, that you should not have hinted your suspicions to me. How could you suffer me to throw away my only child thus, through downright ignorance?— But those persons, I find, whom one takes for one’s best friends, most frequently deceive us: for my part I shall be afraid to believe either man or woman again.”

Mrs. Coker, on her return home, did not feel herself in so ill a humour as she was at her departure from

from Castle-street: in her walk from
 thence to the city, she had time to cool.
 “After all,” said she to herself, “I’m
 “not sorry that I’ve got rid of Sukey:
 “she began to grow confounded ex-
 “travagant and expensive: and then
 “her connections with Saville might
 “have been attended with conse-
 “quences not at all agreeable: she
 “might have been a troublesome
 “burthen to me: and as I have now
 “disposed of her, I can make a bet-
 “ter appearance with my money.
 “As she is really married, and made
 “an honest woman, why, her husband
 “must keep her as well as he can. I
 “have done the duty of a mother,
 “in helping her to get him: and
 “though the word *shoemaker* will
 “sound deplorably in the ears of
 “people of fashion, I can insinuate

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“to my genteel acquaintance, that we
 “were deceived by him, and that
 “my daughter could not be prevailed
 “on to follow my advice, but would
 “have him in spite of all my re-
 “monstrances: by this insinuation
 “I shall not only excuse myself with
 “regard to Sukey’s marriage, but
 “hinder folks from expecting that I
 “should bring her with me any
 “where, as nobody will be desirous
 “of having any thing to say to the
 “wife of a shoemaker: no, not even
 “the lowest of my friends will con-
 “descend to talk to the wife of a
 “shoemaker.”

Mrs. Coker having in this manner
 settled every thing in her own mind,
 secured other lodgings, that she might
 not be embarrassed when she could
 remain

remain no longer in her old apartments.

It was necessary, also, for Saville and myself to think of changing our quarters. I was at liberty to follow my inclination, having no relation or friend to controul or advise me.

Mr. Dawley, on my having finished the account for him, according to his request, gave me the usual compliment upon such occasions, out of the money to be paid into his banker's hands, but took no notice of the fifteen hundred pounds. I, therefore, lost that sum, for I could not bear to dun the husband of Gertrude for it: believing it might be wanted, possibly, towards her support, as he was one of the most extravagant of men.

Miss Harvey quitted Mr. Dawley's house in about a month after the death of Mr. Ashurst, and left her friend overwhelmed with melancholy, which her churlish husband made no efforts to dispell. He, indeed, hastened Theodosia's departure, for he behaved to her with so improper a familiarity, that she could not discreetly stay under the same roof with him.

This intelligence I received from Saville, who, not chusing to be again subservient to any body, though he was rather too young to be left to his own management, went into partnership with a merchant, who lived at the west end of the town, dressed, gave entertainments, played, and kept the best company.

As to myself, uncertain what to do, and not being able, with the
small

small remainder of my little fortune, to think of going into business on my own bottom, I began to grow weary of life, having met with so many disappointments, and to wish to be removed from a world in which I felt a great deal of actual unhappiness, without any comfortable prospects: but my religious principles forbade me to lift up my hand against myself; and I thought also, that while Gertrude existed, I might, by preserving my life, be, one day, serviceable to her. Her dying father's injunctions co-operating with my sincere esteem for her, were powerful incentives to make me willing to bear the heavy load of existence; and those incentives, strengthened by higher considerations, prevented me from sinking under the pressure of despair.

I engaged myself as a book-keeper to a Mr. Fisque, a merchant of considerable reputation, and took a lodging near his house that I might be ready to attend him.

I was received by him and his family, consisting of a wife, and a sister (for he frequently made me dine with him) with much politeness and respect: happening to be acquainted with Mrs. Harvey, he had heard something of my character, and every day gave me new proofs of his partiality in my favour. Yet I, myself, was miserable. Continual reflections on past scenes, the remembrance of the many hours of felicity I enjoyed with Gertrude, and the being assured of her wretchedness, made me indifferent to every thing.

I often

I often saw Miss Harvey, who visited Mrs. and Miss Fisque: she treated me with her usual complaisance; never discovering any resentment at my refusal, nor indeed, from her carriage, would any body have supposed that she had ever brought a mortification of that kind upon herself.

Lady Frolick, also, sometimes came to see the Fisks: Saville, who frequently called on me, informed me that she was not very happy with Sir Harry, as he had imported a French Mistress with him.

As to Sir Thomas Blyth, he purchased an estate near his lady's father, and seldom came to town: whenever he did, I had the pleasure of seeing him. He behaved to me with all his former regard, but rarely mentioned Mrs. Dawley, not being

willing, I imagine, to renew my affliction on ' her account; it being well known that she could not enjoy much happiness, if any, with a man of her husband's disposition; though he used her no otherwise ill, than by not taking much notice, and no care of her. Having picked up a country girl, after the first fortnight of their marriage, he grew so very fond of her, that he took very expensive lodgings for her near Covent-Garden: he was, indeed, in pursuit of every woman who struck his eye; so that by his irregular amours, and his other extravagances, his fortune, including his acquisition by Mr. Ashurst's death, was, in a short time, considerably reduced.

When I had been settled a few weeks with Mr. Fisque, Miss Harvey received

received addresses from a gentleman, possessed of a good estate, in the North, and they were soon afterwards married. I should have been more pleased at the change in her situation, had it not occasioned her entire removal from Mrs. Dawley, whom she now and then saw. When she was gone into Yorkshire, poor Gertrude had no friend left; of course I heard little about her.

Mr. Fisque, whose regard for me seemed to increase, obliged me almost every day to dine with him, and to spend almost every evening at his house: he appeared never so happy as when I was near him. He was, indeed, not blest with so much domestic felicity as he deserved. He was industrious, sober, and careful to improve his fortune: his wife, on

the contrary, spared no expence for the gratification of her passion for dress, and her propensity to all kinds of diversions. Her sister had the same expensive taste, but having only a small income, could not have made a tolerable appearance in company with Mrs. Fisque, if her brother had not generously gave her her board. At that exertion of his generosity, his wife often grumbled: often upbraiding him too for spending all his money on his own family, and grudging her necessaries, though I am pretty sure that he never refused her any thing she asked. He sometimes desired her indeed to consider her children, a pretty boy and girl, the one four, the other six years old, who were very amusing to me, and their innocent prating prevented me from dwelling too much on the late shock I had received.

ceived. The little trifles which I procured for them, in order to encourage them to play, served to make their father more and more pleased with me: but their playfulness, by bringing Gertrude's infant days to my memory, frequently filled me with melancholy reflections, fatal to my peace. With them, however, I always found far more entertainment than in the society of the above-mentioned ladies, who were perpetually running, madly, after pleasure, or else quarrelling about the means of obtaining it; or than even in Mr. Fisque's company: he was, 'tis true, a very worthy man, but no companion for me, if I had been in spirits to attend to his conversation. My time, therefore, setting aside the reasons I had to be unhappy, I passed with hardly any satisfaction.

Saville.

Saville, who, according to his own account of himself, was carried briskly down the current of pleasure, often insisted upon my spending an evening with him: but his mirth was too noisy, his diversions too licentious, and his companions too riotous for me. The life of a rational being was the life I longed to lead: my only ambition was to employ myself usefully, as well as inoffensively: my only wish was to share my leisure hours with a gentle, sensible, female friend, (as every human creature requires some relaxation) who would accompany me in the search of those pleasures which would relieve my mind, without fatiguing it, and render me capable of returning to my business with double spirit. But as that friend was for ever torn from me,

joy

joy could make no impression on my heart.

The dullness of my life, and the disturbance of my mind together, brought on a disorder, which the doctors call a nervous fever: I did not, however, consult them, nor should I have paid any attention to it, but to wish for a period to all my pains, had I not, soon after my being seized with it, been surprized with the sight of Mr. Edwards. He came into the compting-house with Mr. Fisque, who was a distant relation of his.

Taking me by the hand, Mr. Edwards expressed the greatest pleasure at seeing me.

Having examined me closely, he asked me what ailed me: "Though
" I have heard," continued he, shaking his head, "but a poor account of
" your

“ your health a great while. You
 “ must know, Freeland, I am come to
 “ town on purpose to see you, and I
 “ shall take you down with me.”

As I was no stranger to his good-
 humoured hospitable disposition, I only
 smiled at him, and enquired after the
 family.

“ Ay, ay,” cried he, “ you don’t
 “ think I am in earnest now; but
 “ I never was more serious in my
 “ life: you have got an ugly disor-
 “ der upon you, and want a little
 “ country air, and good nursing. I
 “ am old and shall be glad of such
 “ a companion as you to amuse me;
 “ for I have lost my sister, and Letty
 “ is become quite a mope: therefore
 “ you must not refuse me.”

“ You will, I am sure, Sir,” said
 I, “ believe me when I tell you;
 “ that

“ that I think myself extremely oblig-
 “ ed to you for your concern about
 “ me : but I must not leave Mr. Fisque,
 “ at a time when I am sensible he
 “ cannot well spare me.”

“ As to that,” replied Mr. Fisque,
 “ I shall rather put myself to a little
 “ inconvenience than not give you so
 “ good an opportunity of recovering
 “ your health : you had better go, and
 “ have a chance to get well, than stay
 “ here and be lost.”

“ Why he looks like the shadow
 “ of the man he was,” said Mr. Ed-
 wards : “ Come, come, I’ll take no
 “ denial : you shall go away with me to-
 “ morrow.” I was quite amazed at
 the old gentleman’s friendly obstina-
 cy ; but absolutely refused to comply.

Mr. Fisque then declared that he
 would have nothing farther to do with
 me.

me. "It shall never be said," added he, "that I kept you from seeking the remedy left you: go down, go down with Mr. Edwards, and if you don't find yourself mended by the country air, you can but return to town when you are weary."

In short, they both worried me so much that I was no longer able to resist their intreaties, though I had no sort of desire to leave London. I pined to know in what situation Gertrude was. I could get no intelligence about her but from Saville, who lived in a way to be acquainted with every thing, and every body.

After having promised Mr. Edwards, therefore, to remain with him one week, to Saville I went, and asked him, if he could inform me where Gertrude was, and how she did.

He

He looked at me steadily for some time, and demanded the cause of such an enquiry just then.

I informed him of Mr. Edwards's strange proposal, adding, that I could not leave the town till I knew something relating to her.

"Why," answered he, after a pause, "She is much as she was: her husband is excessively in debt: he does not beat her, 'tis true, but he makes her lead, I believe, a d—d uncomfortable life."

"Gracious H—n!" cried I, "surely she does not want for any thing?"

"I can't say—I can't say—" replied he, as if unwilling to speak out, "but I know that his wenches are ready to tear him in pieces for money: and I imagine, therefore, that his
" life,

"wife, of course, has not a great deal
"of cash at her command."

The bare supposition that she had, not every thing agreeably to the wish of her heart, pierced mine. I went immediately to the Bank, told out a hundred, and sealing up five twenty pound notes, dispatched a porter with them, having taken care to disguise my hand in such a manner as to prevent her from knowing from whom they came, and charged the bearer to make no discovery. My latter caution, indeed, was needless, for the man whom I employed was utterly unknown to me. I had met with him in a street, near that in which she lived, and waited at a coffee-house for his return to me.

When he returned, he told me that he had given the letter into the lady's

dy's own hands, and that he had, according to my directions, disappeared before she opened it.

Having thus, in some measure, eased my heart, I was prevailed on to accompany Mr. Edwards to Woodberry, where I was very cordially received by Miss Benyon, though she exclaimed vehemently at seeing me look so ill.

As soon as Mr. Edwards found me under his roofs, he sent for a very skilful physician, telling me, when I offered to oppose him, that he would not be contradicted in his own house, and that I must be orderly, and submit every thing concerning my health to his management. Such a behaviour precluded all resistance. Besides, there was, in this friendly man's solicitude about me, a kind of flattering satisfaction,

tion, which I had not, for a long time, felt in my bosom: and I am well assured, that his paternal carriage contributed more than all the prescriptions of my physician, (though he was a very able one) to my recovery. Since the loss of my parents, (by whom I had been so tenderly indulged) I had not met with any person, but Gertrude, who had, I believed, any real regard for me. This worthy Mr. Edwards behaved to me exactly like a fond father to a hopeful son; and Miss Benyon, following her uncle's example in every respect, treated me with the affection of a sister. She read to me, sung to me, walked with me: and when, from illness or disgust, those amusements proved disagreeable to me, she applied a variety of remedies to my disorder, or
left

left me to recover myself by repose, taking particular care that I should not be disturbed whenever I was inclined to rest.

So much tender assiduity on her side, could not be unnoticed by me: thoroughly sensible of the concern which she expressed for me, and touched by the extreme sollicitude to procure me, not only ease, but pleasure, I felt my breast glow with gratitude: but gratitude was the only passion which that sollicitude and all her attentions excited in it. Tranquility, indeed, she often procured me, but nothing more: I was dead to every kind of joy.

Mr. Edwards, whose esteem for me appeared to be heightened every hour, and who, insensibly drew me into long conversations on various subjects,
took

took an opportunity one day when we were by ourselves in the garden, to let me know that he was acquainted with every thing that had happened to me, since I had lived with Mr. Ashurst, and touched very tenderly on my passion for Gertrude.

I changed colour: I could not hear her name mentioned without emotion, though she had never been a moment from my thoughts: but I was charmed to hear her spoken of with the greatest admiration and esteem. I could not imagine, indeed, how he knew so much concerning us both: he soon, however, put an end to my surprize upon the occasion, by telling me, that Miss Harvey had, with the highest encomiums on me and Gertrude, discovered all that she could discover about us to Mr. and Mrs. Fisque.

In short, I found in a little time, that Miss Harvey had concealed nothing but her own prepossession in my favour: and as she had mentioned Gertrude in so handsome a manner, I had no reason to be dissatisfied with her. I even was secretly rejoiced to have somebody to talk to about her: and my pleasure was doubled when the old gentleman informed me that he had not secreted my affairs from Miss Benyon.

Mr. Edwards and his niece, both interested themselves so much in my behalf, and studied, by so many winning assiduities to alleviate the anguish of my heart, that I was encouraged to disclose its inmost recesses to them: I received such consolation from that disclosure, that I was far less inclined to quit Woodberry than I should other-

wife have been, and had I not believed that Mr. Fisque's business required my presence, I should have preferred no place, at that time, to my worthy friend's hospitable mansion. Determined, however, to do my duty strictly in every station, into which I might be thrown, I signified to Mr. Edwards, as soon as I found myself somewhat better, my design to go to town, giving him reasons for my departure, which could not, I thought, but merit his approbation.

He desired me to make myself perfectly easy. "Mr. Fisque," said he, "has supplied your place, for the present, with a person who was glad to assist him for a trifle, and your remaining at Woodberry shall be attended with no loss to any
"body."

"body : you, therefore, must not think
"of leaving me."

I complied, but I confess, not without reluctance. I was certainly better, but a heavy langour still hung upon my spirits, and I was at times almost as inanimate as a vegetable. Nothing, however, but my ignorance of Gertrude's fate made me unhappy, during my want of health I did not wish, indeed, to see her; but I wished, earnestly wished to hear that she was well; to hear that she was not totally wretched.

I, therefore, wrote to Saville to inform myself of her situation, but in such terms, that my letter, though sufficiently intelligible to him, could not, if lost through his natural heedlessness, be construed to her disadvantage.

He answered it immediately: telling me that Dawley went on pretty much at the old rate; that, as Mrs. Dawley lived in a very retired manner, he had not been able to learn a great deal about her; but believed she was well, as he had heard nothing to the contrary. He concluded with rallying me with regard to Miss Benyon, saying, that as she was an agreeable girl, she might in time make a conquest of my heart.

I could not help uttering the word *never* aloud, though I was alone, at the conclusion of Saville's letter, which very much affected me: for I now began to fancy that Letitia's continual assiduities to give me pleasure, proceeded from the influence of a passion on her heart, more tender than either good-nature or pity. But I immediately

cor-

corrected myself for my vanity; blushing at the same time for giving way to so ridiculous a conjecture. I resolved, however, to be upon my guard, and not to encourage an amiable woman, by any coxcombry in my carriage, to think that I liked her better than I really did: but we cannot always regulate our actions agreeably to our intentions: though I never promoted her little solitudes about me, I could not brutally drive her from me: nor could I, when she came with the most affectionate anxiety to enquire after my health, or offer to procure me any amusement, look displeased, or answer her with harsh language. There was, indeed, a bewitching softness in her behaviour, which called for the gentlest treatment, and which demanded that

return of compassion which she so feelingly bestowed on me: (But, bewitched as her behaviour was, I should not have imagined that she had a particular prepossession in my favour, if Saville had not raised such a supposition in my mind.) Besides, I was strongly induced to endeavour to return her civilities, or at least, to appear pleased with them; because I, by so doing, evidently gave great satisfaction to Mr. Edwards, for whose friendship it was not in my power to make any other acknowledgments. And here let me add, in my justification, that I acted from no interested motives; for I could not possibly believe that (Letitia's predilection for me admitted) her uncle would ever consent, notwithstanding his good opinion

nion of me, to give her to a man without fortune and without friends.

In consequence of such reflections as these, I continued to be pleased with attentions which frequently produced weariness in me; because, I plainly perceived, that both Mr. Edwards and Letty were never so happy as when they thought their endeavours to entertain me had been successful.

Mr. Edwards was, at length, seized with a violent fit of the gout, which confined him a good deal to his own apartment; in which I cheerfully shut up myself with him, when he chose to admit me.

I read to him, I did every thing I could think of to amuse him, and to repay, in some measure, the many favours I had received from him:

but though I spent several hours with him, I was also for several hours with Miss Benyon, as he could not come down either to dinner, or supper. And as I was obliged to ride, or walk, for my health, she always kept me company : sometimes strolling with me in the garden ; sometimes riding out with me, either on horseback, or in the post-chaise, by her uncle's order, who said, that too much confinement was very bad for young people.

In those walks, in those rides, I had frequent opportunities of observing her good sense and good nature. To every creature in distress she extended her good nature ; the suffering poor round her uncle's estate often tasted, in my sight, the sweets of her benevolence ; and I, not seldom, assisted her in relieving their wants, as

far

far as my scanty abilities would give me leave. The poor looked cheerful; even the sick smiled at our approach, and blessed us, fervently, at our departure from them.

One day, when we had taken a longer walk than usual, to a cottage which contained a worthy family uncommonly distressed, whom she was eager to relieve, she had not, on searching her pocket, money enough to enable her to be as kind as she wished to be. Taking out, therefore, half a guinea from mine I gave it her, desiring that I might be permitted to add my donation to hers.

The mistress of the cot, seeing the gold, cried, in an ecstasy of joy, "Now, heaven bless you both, for
"you will make the handsomest, and
I 5 "the

"the happiest couple that ever the sun
"shone upon."

I only smiled at the good woman's
rapturous effusion, but Letitia's face
was crimsoned all over, and she fetch-
ed a deep sigh: the flush in her
cheeks I imputed to her modesty, and
attributed the sudden heaving of her
gentle bosom, to the reflections which
arose in her mind on the misery
which had moved her compassion, and
attracted her munificence. I

In our way home (we had more
than a mile to walk) she said little;
seemed thoughtful, and looked fa-
tigated. I could not help taking no-
tice of the alteration in her appear-
ance. I asked her if she was not
well: if she would stop.

She thanked me, with a remark-
able softness in her voice and man-
ner,

ner, and confessed that she had never been so much affected, nor so weary: adding, that she could not tell how to go on.

I looked round for a seat; there was nothing to rest upon but a bank. As the grass was dewy, I would on no account suffer her to sit down, till I had spread the flap of my coat upon it, that she might receive no injury from its dampness. (I would have pulled my coat off, but she would not by any means consent to that motion.) She then sat down by me, and appeared so much indisposed, that I was afraid she would have fainted: I was obliged to support her with my arm till she grew better.

When she rose up, she thanked me again, but could not walk without lean-

ing on my arm, which I very readily offered to her. I should have made the same offer to any other lady in the same situation. She seemed prodigiously affected with the meer humanity of my behaviour, and leant on me with a kind of tender satisfaction; at which, though I gave no encouragement to it, I could not have shewn displeasure, without having at the same time discovered an unfeeling disposition. I really pitied her, and believed that her disorder had proceeded entirely from the goodness of her heart, and that the shock which her sensibility had received, had occasioned all her discomposure. When we came home, she went up immediately to her uncle, and after having staid some time with him, came running to me, and, with a smile, which threw

threw more tenderness into her features than I had ever before observed in them, expressed a great many acknowledgments for the care I had taken of her. During the remainder of the day she treated me as if I had given her unusual pleasure; and Mr. Edwards, also, redoubled his civilities to me, though he could not come down: charging Miss Benyon, before me, to make all the amusement for me in her power.

The gentle Letitia obliged her uncle, but too willingly, and, at length, exhibited so many indubitable, though modest proofs, of her affection, that I resolved to quit the house, to prevent her from being in any suspense about me, as I found myself incapable of returning it.

Con-

Considering, however, on recollection, that an abrupt removal from my friend's house, after his numerous kindnesses to me, at a time too when he was confined by illness to his apartment, would have a very strange appearance, I became quite at a loss to know how to act, and what resolution to make. "Shall I," said I to myself, "let Letitia know that I never can be hers? no, such a positive declaration to a woman who has taken such pains to please me, and who is of so delicate a frame of mind, will shock her extremely, and make me also appear to Mr. Edwards in a very odious light; besides, she has neither said nor done any thing to deserve so cruel a proceeding. I am afraid, however, that by not preventing

her

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“her from giving encouragement to
“expectation, I may render her un-
“happier than she is. I cannot, in-
“deed, love her well enough to mar-
“ry her; but I certainly cannot bear
“to see so amiable a woman uneasy
“on my account.”

I had no rest all night, neither
could I determine in what manner to
act for the best.

About five o'clock in the morning,
I was roused by a great bustle in
the house. Soon afterwards a servant
came into my room, and told me,
with much concern, that his master
was dead.

I was exceedingly shocked and af-
flicted at this sudden and unexpected
intelligence: nobody imagined that he
was so near his end: his death was
a severe blow to me, because I had

few

few friends; none so kind to me as he had been; and I most sincerely lamented it.

When I came down into the Par-
lour, I found poor Letitia exquisitely
distressed: I wished to comfort her,
but I was fearful of saying too much:
decency also, I thought, required my
immediate departure from a house, in
which were only a single young lady
and servants: but Miss Benyon to
often intreated me to stay till the ar-
rival of Mr. Fisque, whom she had
sent for, that I could not pursue my
intentions.

Mr. Edwards went off suddenly by
the gout's flying up into his stomach.
He had, in a former illness, apparent-
ly a more dangerous one, left word
for them to send for Mr. Fisque, (who
was,

was, next to Miss Benyon, his nearest relation) immediately on his decease.

Mr. Fisque, having rode post, came before the day was over. Being greatly affected, and not a little fatigued, he begged leave to defer opening the will till next morning.

How shall I express the astonishment I felt upon hearing that, after having ordered the payment of a few legacies, Mr. Fisque being the principal legatee, he had left the residue of his fortune between me and Miss Benyon, provided we agreed to marry? directing, however, that in case of my refusal, she was to possess all, except five hundred pounds, which he bequeathed to me as a proof of his esteem.

'Tis impossible to describe either my looks or my feelings upon the occasion.

I hardly

I hardly knew whether I was alive or not; inclination strongly revolted against my marriage with Miss Benyon, and yet I was ready to die with sorrow at being necessitated to refuse her. My heart sunk within me when, lifting up my eyes, I beheld her pale, trembling and expecting me, doubtless, I to express the transports of a man overjoyed at his good fortune.

I sat in the most embarrassed condition to be conceived, not knowing in what way to extricate myself from it. My uneasiness and my awkwardness every moment increased: at last, however, believing that her disappointment would be doubled by a delayed explanation of my sentiments, as she might have, while I remained in silence, construed that

very silence in her own favour, and dreading to make an addition to her disquiet, being also not less, perhaps, more abashed and disconcerted than herself, I rose up, determined to put an end to her suspense and my own. I went up to her, and with a countenance which fully evinced my concern for what I was going to say, addressed her in the following terms:

“ In what light, Miss Benyon, can
 “ you behold a man, who, after all
 “ the civilities he has received from
 “ you, after all the favours bestowed
 “ on him by your excellent uncle,
 “ finds himself obliged to tell you
 “ that it is not in his power to ac-
 “ cept of his *last* favour, though
 “ sensible at the same time, that by
 “ his non-acceptance of it he rejects
 “ a most desirable blessing? But you
 “ are

“are well acquainted with my attachment to another: my happiness with her can never, 'tis true, be accomplished; but I cannot possibly give my heart to any other woman: look upon me, therefore, as an ungrateful wretch, unworthy of the regard with which you have honoured me, and bestow your heart on a more deserving man. Be assured, however, that though I make this declaration with the deepest regret, and though I cannot, by any means, become intitled to a moiety of what your generous uncle left between us, I am, and ever will be your sincere, your faithful friend.”

I was proceeding to express in still more forcible terms my concern and my esteem, but a heavy sigh from her afflicted bosom, followed by a fainting fit,

fit, chained up my tongue. My embarrassment, and my sorrow increased. I felt a kind of horror at myself for what I had just said, and even wished to recall my words. I assisted Mr. Fisque in recovering her; sat down by her, and, when she opened her eyes, begged her to forgive me for having too abruptly delivered sentiments, which I could not, circumstanced as I was, have honourably concealed from her.

She raised her languid eyes, and with a face as glowing as it was before pale; with a voice, too, softened to excess by her grief and her despair, cried, "Do not, Mr. Freeland, do not accuse yourself for what you cannot help. I only ought to make apologies for having occasioned the uneasiness which you at present, feel: but I will

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“ will put an end to it immediately,
 “ tho’ I must sometimes sigh, sometimes
 “ weep, to think that—I will say no
 “ more upon a subject on which I should
 “ be forever silent. My uncle loved
 “ you, loved you as his son, and as he
 “ long wished to have you related to him,
 “ he had no way to gratify that wish
 “ but—however, you shall be no loser
 “ by your ingenuousness. You have
 “ acted like a man of honour, and
 “ Heaven will, I hope, reward you one
 “ day, for all your virtues, with your
 “ Gertrude.”

Tears would not permit her to go
 on. She intreated us to let her retire
 to her own apartment, that she might
 try to compose herself. For my part,
 I was too much agitated to detain her.

I walked up and down, for a couple
 of hours, in a state of mind not easily

to be described; scarce attending to Mr. Fisque, who spoke to me several times.

I then seemed to be just waked from a dream. I rang the bell, and when the servant appeared, ordered him to ask the maid if she had been up to Miss Benyon; if she knew how she did.

The girl soon came down with her mistress's thanks, telling me that she was a little better, and hoped Mr. Fisque and myself would make a good supper, as she could not see us till the morning.

I stepped out after the maid, and charged her not to leave her mistress, as her grief for her uncle made it highly necessary that somebody should be with her.

Nanny promised to obey me. After

After having sat down to table with Mr. Fisque, just out of form, without having the least inclination to taste a morsel, I retired to my room inconceivably dejected. I grieved for Mr. Edwards, for the amiable, the real friend; and I grieved the more for not being at liberty to accept of his generous legacy: still more did I grieve for having caused so much disquiet to so every way deserving a woman as Miss Benyon.

In the morning she joined us at breakfast; pale and unrefreshed, with her eyes almost swelled out of her head.

As soon as Mr. Fisque went into the garden, she thanked me for the care which Nanny had taken of her, and assured me that she should ever think herself obliged to me for it.

I assured

I assured her, in my turn, that I should always be happy in having an opportunity of discovering my esteem for her.—“As I am certain, “Miss Benyon,” continued I, “that “you are convinced of the impropriety of my remaining at Woodberry, “after the departure of Mr. Fisque, “let me intreat you to think on some “friend whose company will be agreeable to you, and to send for her to “come and stay with you, for I cannot bear the thoughts of your being “alone.”

She appeared to feel a melancholy pleasure at the uneasiness I expressed on her account, and, after a little hesitation, dispatched a man and horse to the next village to an old lady, who had always been upon a very friendly footing with her mother.

As the servant brought word that Mrs. Bruton could not be with his lady till the next day, I prevailed on Mr. Fisque to wait her arrival.

I spent several hours with Letitia, in private, and availed myself of all my reasoning and elocution to compose, to amuse her mind, and to hinder her from dwelling too intensely on what would, I knew, only give her pain. I flattered myself that my arguments, and my persuasions were successful, for she grew much more calm, talked about several indifferent things, and gave me some little commissions to execute for her in town; desiring me at the same time, not to forget her, but to come and see her now and then for the benefit of the air, as it had, in her opinion,

opinion, been of no small service to me.

She made this last request with tears in her eyes. I promised to comply with it, and, pressing her hand, begged her to believe I wanted no inducement to come and see if she was as happy as I wished her to be.

In this manner we spent the remainder of the day together.

When Mrs. Bruton arrived, I earnestly recommended Miss Benyon to her care; bade her adieu with as little ceremony as possible, that I might not revive sensations too affecting for her repose, and left her with a mind not more at ease, I will venture to say, than her own.

I had not been above three days in town when Mr. Fisque, who was appointed joint executor with Miss Ben-

yon, in case I refused the terms before-mentioned, came to me, while I sat writing, and desired me to step with him to the bank.

“ For what ?” said I, “ I have no Business there.”

“ More than you think of, replied he, smiling ; I have received orders from Miss Benyon to transfer ten thousand pounds which Mr. Edwards had in the funds ; and his estates are to be sold, that the produce of them may be equally divided between you and Letitia, who is determined that your refusal shall not deprive you of the fortune which her uncle designed for you.”

“ Generous creature !” cried I, in a transport of gratitude : “ but I cannot, will not, accept of her bounty—I shall never be able to repay it—I
“ will

“ will not, therefore, touch a shilling
 “ of her fortune ; let her bestow it on
 “ a man who can make her happy,
 ‘ and let me be totally forgotten.”

“ Your talking signifies nothing,
 said he, “ I must comply with her
 “ commands : you will only render her
 “ still more miserable, by this second
 “ refusal.”

“ I cannot, however, alter my resolu-
 “ tion,” answered I ; “ and I will, if you
 “ please, write my fixed and final senti-
 “ ments to her upon the occasion.”

He made no objection to that step ;
 and I wrote the subsequent lines.

“ To Miss Benyon.

“ Y O U oppress me too much
 “ madam ; such generosity merits a
 “ warmer return than it can possibly
 “ receive from a man already dead to
 “ every thing this world can bestow ;

“ but you may depend upon his warm-
 “ est wishes for the eternal felicity of
 “ a woman who is possessed of so ex-
 “ alted a mind. Whenever I am con-
 “ scious of having it in my power to
 “ make an adequate acknowledgement
 “ for so liberal an offer, I will most
 “ freely accept of it; but as I am
 “ pretty well assured that I shall never
 “ be able to make those acknowlege-
 “ ments, I can only pray, as I do most
 “ fervently, for your happiness with
 “ a person more worthy of your libe-
 “ rality. With these sentiments, ma-
 “ dam, sentiments which will never,
 “ I believe be driven from my mind,
 “ I can only assure you that I shall
 “ ever remain,

“ Your sincere friend and very

“ much obliged humble servant,

C. FREELAND.

Before

Before this letter reached her, though I sent it by express, she was in a high fever. The next news I heard was her entire insensibility to every thing about her. My feelings, on being acquainted with such melancholy intelligence, may be more easily conceived than described. I was struck with a kind of horror, for I looked upon myself as the cause, in some measure, of her indisposition.

I hurried down with Mr. Fisque, but she was too far gone to know either of us; and, though every thing was done that could be thought of, she died in about four and twenty hours after our arrival.

This second shock, received in the same place, almost deprived me of sense and motion. I became absolutely stupid with sorrow, and had hardly

strength sufficient to give the necessary orders upon the melancholy occasion.

Having sent for a lawyer, the moment she was taken ill, she left me every thing; lest Mr. Fisque should not have so easily complied with her injunctions with regard to the transfer as she had desired, or lest I should have made any objections to it, of which she was not a little apprehensive.

Mrs. Bruton, seeing me so overwhelmed with grief forebore to increase it, by softening, as much as possible, several particulars concerning her illness; telling me, she believed the fright occasioned by her uncle's sudden death had too violently affected her spirits, as she was, from a child, of a very tender, gentle disposition.

I thanked

I thanked the old lady, in my heart, for sparing me the self-accusation of having been, in the slightest degree, accessary to the poor girl's death ; and (finding that they would not be unacceptable) I presented her with some of her best lace and linen, with a handsome sum for mourning.

After having seen every thing relating to her funeral properly performed, and attended as chief mourner—I was a most sincere one—I gave liberally to all the servants and the neighbouring poor, and then hurried from a place where I had met with so considerable an addition to my affliction.

I was, however, no better in London. I remained with Mr. Fisque, till I could make some enquiries after Gertrude, and determine how to dispose of myself. Frequently did I re-

flect on the insufficiency of riches to confer happiness; as I found myself only more miserable by the riches which had devolved to me, and I knew no way of enjoying them but by the distribution of them.

In consequence of this train of thinking I gave Mr. Fisque two thousand pounds, and settled the same sum on each of his children, as they were Mr. Edwards's nearest relations: I designed to do more for them, but I chose to stay and see how Mr. Fisque went on, very much fearing that his wife's extravagance would encrease with the enlargement of his fortune.

Calling upon Saville, I heard from him that Mrs. Dawley lived just as she had ever done, since her marriage, privately; and that Dawley seldom saw her but when he required her
to

to entertain his company: company very improper for her: among whom was a man of a disposition, with regard to women, exactly similar to his own, and to whom he was under no trifling obligations.

I shuddered at this information; but on recollection, thanked heaven, that I had money at command, and that it was in my power to send her assistance.

Accordingly, I sealed up notes amounting to five hundred pounds, and dispatched them by the porter whom I had before employed.

He soon returned with my packet unsealed, telling me, that the lady not only refused to take it, but threatened him with correction if he ever came again.

I was extremely at a loss to find out the meaning of this proceeding, and stretched my thoughts to contrive

some method to prevail on her to receive part of the above-mentioned sum. After several attempts, fruitless attempts, I dropped my design for the present, and only sent the following lines to her by the penny post.

“ To Mrs. Dawley.

“ Madam,

“ Having several times made efforts
 “ to be serviceable to you in a manner
 “ the least alarming to your well-
 “ known, and long-admired delicacy,
 “ I take the liberty to assure you, that
 “ the packet which you refused to open
 “ came from a sincere friend, who would
 “ have died rather than even have
 “ formed a wish to take advantage of
 “ your situation.—More I dare not
 “ say.—Let me only add, however,
 “ that if ever you should find your-
 “ self in want of any assistance, you
 “ will

“ will immediately receive it by dispatching a few lines to A. B. at Batson’s coffee-house, Cornhill.”

Finding by Mr. Edwards’s steward that he had a very good estate in Somersetshire, besides the Woodberry one, and never having been in that part of the country, I hoped that new scenes might give a new turn to my disordered mind, weary as I was of every place, and tired as I was of the society of every human creature about me.

While the preparations were making for my journey, I desired Mr. Fisque to call every day at Batson’s, and whenever he saw a letter directed to A. B. to forward it to me by express.

The morning before that fixed for my departure, Saville came to see me, and told me, that he could not let me go out

out of town without giving me a con-
 tinuation of the history of the Cokers.
 "You remember," said he, "that I
 "left the gentle Sukey to accompany
 "her husband. She at length, but
 "in a very ill humour, reached his hor-
 "rid house in the horrid alley. De-
 "termined to know how she went on,
 "I stepped into a milliner's over the
 "way; purchased a few trifles, and so
 "far ingratiated myself with the shop
 "girl, that she was ready to tell me
 "every thing. She was as eager to
 "get intelligence about the new-
 "married lady's motions as I could
 "be for my life.—Ever set a wo-
 "man to watch a woman.—I called
 "too, now and then, myself, about
 "my pumps, and so made a sort of
 "friendship with Bently; but the
 "dog was close, and would not
 "be

“ be as leaky as I wished him
 “ to be. I was obliged, therefore,
 “ to have recourse to my little
 “ shop girl, his neighbour, who,
 “ in about six weeks after their mar-
 “ riage, informed me, that a small af-
 “ fair had happened which had con-
 “ fined Mrs. Bently to her bed;
 “ which confinement both she and Mrs.
 “ Coker attributed to the violent passion
 “ into which Mr. Bently threw himself
 “ upon her ordering a chair to be called
 “ one morning to carry her to the
 “ park. However, she got well again
 “ (without any other disagreeable cir-
 “ cumstances attending, than a long
 “ bill at the apothecary’s, and about
 “ twenty guineas in fees to the doctor)
 “ dressed and went abroad as usual.
 “ One night, at the play, she made an
 “ acquaintance with a Jew, and liking
 “ his

“ his propofals, preferred handsome
 “ lodgings in the ftrand, to her husband’s
 “ fhocking fhop. She was accommo-
 “ dated in thofe lodgings, fometime,
 “ before either Mrs. Coker, or Mr.
 “ Bently difcovered her new quarters;
 “ the latter, indeed, gave himfelf
 “ mighty little trouble about her, and
 “ the former having been ftruck with the
 “ graceful air of a corporal, whom fhe
 “ accidentally met with one day while
 “ fhe was refting herfelf upon a bench
 “ in the Bird-cage walk, and who
 “ paffed for a captain in a marching
 “ regiment, had but little leifure to
 “ think of her daughter.

“ Mrs. Bently finding the Jew pretty
 “ flufh of money, had fo many various
 “ employments for it, that he began
 “ to be weary of her extravagance.

“ Juft

“ Just about this time, Mrs. Coker
“ became so softened by the corporal’s
“ addresses that she consented to be
“ married to him privately, to avoid
“ the fuss and ceremony which attend
“ publick weddings, and to receive the
“ less interruption to their *douceurs*.
“ The husband went out the next morn-
“ ing, upon business, promising his
“ fond bride to come home to din-
“ ner, but has never been heard of
“ since; and she has been only able,
“ with all her enquiries after him, to
“ learn that he went to the Bank, sold
“ out their common stock, and having
“ a few affairs to settle in Ireland, took
“ post for Park-gate with the money,
“ and embarked in the first packet which
“ sailed for that kingdom. His ena-
“ moured spouse has not yet received a
“ single line of consolation from him.

“ Mrs. Coker

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“ Mrs. Coker, alias Gahagan, being, upon this new and unforeseen event, rather distressed for a present subsistence, had some thoughts of following her former occupation of bed-making. With these thoughts, one day, she by chance saw her daughter just as she was stepping into a hackney coach from her lodgings.

“ Mrs. Gahagan, catching her by the sleeve, told her that she had something of importance to communicate to her, and followed her into the coach without any ceremony.

“ Mrs. Bently could have very well dispensed with her mother’s company at that juncture: yet the old gentlewoman made so good a use of her time, that, ’tis with great probability supposed, they agreed to plunder the
“ Jew

“Jew before he had resolution enough
 “to turn her into the street; for she
 “brought her mother home with her,
 “and they both decamped the next
 “morning, taking every thing that was
 “moveable with them.

“The young lady is, by this time,
 “I imagine trading upon her own
 “bottom, though she was within an
 “ace of falling into Mordecai’s hands,
 “who swears he will have her tried
 “at the Old Bailey if ever he lays
 “hold of her.”

Depressed as my spirits were by a
 series of disappointments, the *dénoue-*
ment of Mrs. Coker’s history excited
 rather serious reflections, than divert-
 ing ones in my mind: nor did I feel
 myself in the least inclined to laugh at
 it;

it; I was far more disposed to pity them. “ How much, thought I, might
“ these people have been respected
“ had they remained contented with
“ the stations in which providence had
“ placed them, had they been satisfied
“ with a competency, and had they contributed by a course of virtuous industry to procure for themselves the
“ comfortable conveniencies of life!
“ What striking examples are they to
“ those, who are seized with a raging
“ desire to appear in situations, in
“ which they cannot, possibly, appear
“ without making themselves highly ridiculous and contemptible? and
“ how necessary is it for all, who would
“ be happy in themselves and respected
“ by the world, to remember that folly,
“ vanity, and pride, generally lead
“ their

“their misguided votaries to want, in-
“famy and ruin!”

I could not, in this way of thinking, part with Saville, without advising him not to encourage girls for the future, by flattering them, and fooling with them, to swerve from the paths of virtue, and discretion; adding, that he ought to place a great deal of Sukey's propensity to vicious pursuits to his own account, as she might have been contented with such a man as Bently for a husband, without taking, however, the dishonest methods she made use of to get him, if he had never taken notice of her.

He took what I said as it was intended; though he positively averred that Sukey made the first overtures to him, in hopes of duping him, as she had afterwards drawn in Bently.

“When

“ When she found,” continued he, “ that I
 “ was not to be tricked into matrimony,
 “ she was extremely ready to strike upon
 “ easier terms, with a view, I suppose to
 “ be handsomely rigged, and kept in re-
 “ pair as a mistress. But I imagine,
 “ as you have conversed only with
 “ virtuous women, Charles, you will
 “ be apt to set me down for one of the
 “ lawless libertines of the creation, who
 “ go about seeking to seduce the fair
 “ sex from the paths of innocence.”

I told him, that I wished his female
 acquaintance were, for his own sake,
 more virtuously inclined, and we then
 separated.

As Mr. Fisque would not, so anxious
 was he about my health, let me rest
 till I had promised to hire a servant for
 the journey, I took John, who had lived
 with

with Mr. Ashurst, and who offered himself to me, into my service.

The sight of him renewed my grief, but as he had always behaved with the greatest respect to his young mistress, and discovered a sincere regard for her, I was the more willing to have him about me.

We arrived at this place before night. I found only an old gardener and his wife, whom Mr. Edwards had placed here to take care of the house, which was rather in a ruinous condition. These honest people welcomed me as their master, and procured me all necessary refreshment.

The next day, on surveying the house and gardens, I found them both improvable at a small expence, and as I had met with so little satisfaction in society, I thought this retired place would be
a quiet

a quiet retreat, in which I might shut myself up whenever I had a mind to steal from the busy world. On viewing the environs, I found that I might live totally undisturbed; my neighbours consisting chiefly of a few poor cottagers, to whom, I believed, I could be beneficial, by setting them to work about the intended alterations in my grounds.

For some time my new employments amused my thoughts; but the apprehensions of Gertrude's being in distress soon prevented me from taking any pleasure in them. Not hearing from Mr. Fisque concerning her, in any shape, and knowing that she must be very much reduced indeed, before she would apply to any creature for assistance; I could rest no longer so far removed from her. I hurried, therefore, to town,
but

but arriving at an hour when I was pretty sure of Mr. Fisque's not being at home, I went to a coffee-house in the neighbourhood. Happening there to take up a news-paper of the preceding week, by mistake, the first article in it, which struck my eye, was the following one;

“Yesterday a gentleman, at the west
 “end of the town, shot himself through
 “the head, having lost a considerable
 “sum at play the evening before,
 “which is thought to be the occasion
 “of this rash action.”

I threw down the paper, and was looking about for that of the day, when a gentleman, who sat near me, taking up that which I had laid down, said to another; “So, this fellow who has shot
 “himself is Dawley of Argyle-build-
 “ings, is it? He married a very pret-

"ty girl out of the city some time ago."

I started—The other answered, "Ay
" and has not left her a shilling : nay,
" every thing in his house is seized, and
" his wife forced to starve almost in a
" little lodging."

I staid no longer ; but, running in-
to the street, called the first coach I saw,
in order to make the more expedition,
and bade the fellow drive as fast as
possible to Argyle-buildings ; yet so
little satisfied was I with the velocity of
the horses, that I, more than once, was
going to quit the carriage in hopes of
walking faster. I cannot describe the
agitation of my mind ; I could hardly
breathe ; nor can I give any account of
my reflections during the ride, which
seemed amazingly tedious to me.

When

When I stopped at Mr. Dawley's house, I ordered the coachman to knock at the door, and desired to be conducted immediately to Mrs. Dawley where ever she was.

A maid servant, whom the creditors had retained there to look after the effects till they could be removed, came to me, and with a sorrowful face said, "My poor mistress, sir, is but a little way off," directing me to a house in Swallow-street, the appearance of which gave me no advantageous idea of her apartment in it; but I said not to make any examinations below; I flew up a pair of narrow stairs.—Recollecting however, on a sudden, that the unexpected sight of me might too much alarm her, I bade the maid of the house, who followed me, to let Mrs. Dawley know **L** 2

know that Mr. Freeland begged to see her.

She immediately went into the chamber; I heard my name repeated in a faint voice. As the door was open, I could no longer curb my eager desire to see the dear object of all my wishes.—But oh! heaven and earth!—In what a situation—In what a pity-moving situation did I find her!—She was in a poor, shabby room, only just big enough to contain a bed and one chair.—She was in her bed, pale and emaciated, yet her features were lovely as ever.—Her face was flushed with joy at my approach, while I felt an emotion which I did not strive to conceal.

I sat down by her side, but wanted words to express my sensations: my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth.—She held out her hand, on
which

which there was scarce any flesh remaining, and with a weak, tremulous voice, but in accents ineffably sweet, said, "I am permitted, then, to see
 " you, Mr. Freeland—Heaven has,—
 " at last—heard my prayers, and sent
 " me my best,—my only friend."

" Your friend? exclaimed I,—yes,
 " my Gertrude—for you are now mine,
 " added I, eagerly pressing her hand—
 " in me you have ever had the faithful-
 " est—the tenderest of friends and of
 " lovers; and heaven has, also, heard me
 " in blessing me with an ample fortune
 " to make the dear angel of my heart,
 " on whom I have ever fondly doated,
 " as happy as she deserves to be."

A deep sigh from the bosom of this amiable creature, while she pressed my hand in return, affected me in a manner not to be described.—She made an

effort to speak, I thought—but her voice died away in sounds inarticulate upon her quivering, livid lips.

At last, raising her head a little, and looking at me with her eyes full of tears, “What a poor, inconsistent creature am I, said she.—Just now, I felt more joy than I could possibly utter, at the long wished for sight of you, and now—when I consider how much pain you will receive from what I can give me, at most, but a momentary satisfaction,—I am ready to accuse myself of being cruel for having desired it.”

“I do not understand you, my dearest Gertrude, said I; what, but lasting satisfaction, but permanent joy may I now expect to reward me for all your sufferings, and to recompense me for my own sufferings on your dear account?”

“count? You are, at length, released
 “from the cause of all your misery
 “in the marriage-state, and I shall be
 “blest beyond expression in employing
 “myself to render every future hour
 “of your life, an hour of happiness;
 “to make you, if possible, as happy
 “as you have, I fear, been otherwise
 “since we parted.”

“Unhappy I have been indeed, re-
 “plied she—exquisitely unhappy, since
 “that parting:—but unhappy I must
 “still continue to be—for at this very in-
 “stant, while I am permitted to taste feli-
 “city, I have too much reason to be as-
 “sured that my felicity will be of a very
 “short duration—I must leave you, my
 “dear, my ever loved Freeland.—I must
 “leave you—never to return.—Long—
 “long have I struggled with adversity—
 “it has, now, almost conquered me—

“just at a time too—but I am loth to
 “make you wretched—I begin to
 “wish that you did not love me so
 “well.”

Her words almost froze me with horror, but her looks still more forcibly confirmed the dreadful truths, which she knew not how to deliver.—Yet—yet, unwilling to understand her, and longing to be deceived, I endeavoured to turn the approaching and alarming evil from me, and tried with all the tenderest eloquence of love, to cheer her drooping spirits, to animate her heart with hope.

With a faint smile, which too plainly predicted her near death, she cried—
 “Do not—oh! do not my dear Free-
 “land flatter yourself—I am dying—
 “indeed I am—you cannot be igno-
 “rant of my situation—I grieve,—
 “Heaven

“ Heaven knows how much I grieve,
 “ to give such anguish to your gene-
 “ rous breast—let me intreat you,—
 “ let me conjure you to be resigned,
 “ and not lament me. I have, ’tis
 “ true, endured a great deal in being
 “ separated from you,—doubly wretch-
 “ ed have I been in being obliged to
 “ give myself to another, but I am
 “ now so amply rewarded for all my
 “ wretchedness by seeing you again;—
 “ by seeing you near me in my last mo-
 “ ments;—by having it in my power,
 “ —thanks to my all merciful Creator!
 “ for condescending to let me enjoy my
 “ senses, at a time when so many are
 “ deprived of their intellects—to pour
 “ forth my gratitude to you—that
 “ I shall die contented, provided I can
 “ but behold you tolerably composed;
 “ provided you will promise me not to

“grieve—will you not promise me,
 “Freeland?” added she tenderly, laying
 her icy hand on mine.

Struck with the dreadful idea of losing her for ever, just when I believed that I was going to be united to her, I was almost bereaved of life: I shook with horror: my heart sunk within me, and I should, probably, have fainted away had not her affecting interrogation roused me. I wrung my hands, smote my bosom, and wept aloud, *ne*, all the agony of despair.

Recollecting, however, while I gave a loose to unavailing sorrow that she might, possibly, by timely assistance, be snatched from the brink of the grave, I rose, and in a frantick kind of hurry ordered the nurse who attended her to fly that instant for a physician, whom I named; ordering her, also, to bring
 any

any other of reputation, if he was not to be found.

The dying angel, feebly cried,
 “ Stop—oh! stop, my Freeland—no—
 “ thing can be done for me:—It is too
 “ —too late—do not ruffle yourself
 “ thus;—let me spend the very short
 “ time allowed for us to be together
 “ in confessing all the esteem and af-
 “ fection with which my fond heart
 “ from its infancy, I may say, has
 “ glowed for you;—in thanking you as
 “ long as I have breath left, for your
 “ numberless acts of friendship, especi-
 “ ally the last important one, which I
 “ refused, believing it to have been sent
 “ by one who had a base design upon
 “ me; but which, I afterwards, attri-
 “ buted to you alone.—Nothing can
 “ save my life;—make yourself, there-
 “ fore, easy my Freeland, by consider-

“ ing from how many future evils my dis-
 “ solution may preserve me, and how
 “ much reason both you and I have to
 “ render thanks to heaven for taking me
 “ out of a world of affliction : a world in
 “ which we never were designed to be
 “ perfectly happy ; as an uninterrupted
 “ course of felicity in our present state
 “ would make us too fondly attached to
 “ it, and hinder us from preparing our-
 “ selves in a proper manner for ano-
 “ ther. Cease, therefore, my dearest,
 “ my only friend—cease to disturb
 “ yourself about what ought to give
 “ you the sincerest satisfaction.”

Here she fell back on her pillow, and
 lay for some moments, as if her soul
 had winged its flight ; then raising up
 her head, she thus proceeded :

“ The God of mercy, who knows the
 “ purity of my heart, though he has
 “ forbidden

“ forbidden us to be united here, will,
 “ I trust, make us mutually and eter-
 “ nally happy hereafter, if we deserve
 “ eternal felicity.—Look up, therefore,
 “ to that merciful Being with a lively
 “ hope; my Freeland, submit patiently
 “ to the pain of the moment, and bear
 “ the pangs of separation with a be-
 “ coming fortitude, remembering
 “ that”—

She might have continued to speak for ever, had her strength not failed her, so little was I capable of interrupting her: so much was my whole frame affected.—I was melted with tenderness and grief;—I strove to speak—I could not utter a syllable.—I sighed,—I groaned,—but articulation was totally suspended.

She grew weaker and weaker—On her asking for something to drink, I
 ran

ran to the nurse, and took from her a little cordial, which she had poured out for her, but my trembling hand could scarcely convey it to her lips—those dear lips, how were they changed!—Gazing on her dear, almost lifeless features, I burst into tears—“Oh, Gertrude,—Gertrude,—talking is to no purpose—I must feel—I cannot—this agony is insupportable—”

“Pray to heaven,” cried the sweet expiring faint, “to prevent you from sinking under this hard, this very hard trial indeed.—I feel as much, perhaps more than you;—but it will soon be over with me, and I shall be at rest for ever.—Yet, if you love me, do not give way to grief. Preserve your life, take care of your health; the pangs of death are not half so keen as those
“I suffer,

“I suffer, at this instant, for your sake;
 “Do not then distress me in my last
 “minutes, by encouraging me to ima-
 “gine that you will not comply with
 “my earnest, my final request. Be
 “assured, that only by complying with
 “it, you can contribute to make me
 “leave the world without murmuring
 “at my fate. If you love me—”

“If I love you?” exclaimed I,
 “Oh, Gertrude! you are far, far, dear-
 “er to my racked soul, than health,
 “than life, then every thing—”

“I believe you, I am satisfied my
 “only love,” cried she, “but leave
 “me, leave me for a moment; I
 “would fain spare you the torturing
 “sight: I would not have you see me
 “die—”

I could

I could not answer her, but caught her in my arms, and pressed her face to mine.

With a look strongly expressive of the anguish which her angelic mind endured, with the tenderest look to me, and then, with the most devout elevation of her eyes to the throne of grace, she breathed her last sigh on my bosom.

I knew not for some moments what passed in the room; I was almost deprived of life, and nearly resembling the lovely corpse, which I still closely held in my arms. At last, the nurse with John's assistance, whom she called up, forced me from the fatal spot; I staid no longer, however, in the apartment to which they conducted me, than till I recovered strength enough to return to the bed of death. I again pressed

pressed my poor clay cold Gertrude to my bosom, glewed my lips to hers, and called on her as if she had been able to hear me.

For three days I remained in the same frantic state; nor could Mr. Fisque nor Saville, whom John brought to me, by turns, make the least impression on me. I declared with vehemence that no persuasions, no force should draw me from Gertrude, while she was above ground; nor could all that they, in the warmth of their friendship urged, prevail on me to go into another room.

When I was just ready to drop, I threw myself across the bed in which my poor Gertrude died, and found more satisfaction on it than I could possibly have had in any other place.

As

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As soon as I was a little refreshed, I rose again in order to contemplate her lovely face—for lovely still it was—while she lay in her coffin. I threw myself on my knees, and ardently implored Heaven to take me too from a world in which I could never expect any more felicity.

In this melancholy way did I employ myself till they were obliged to screw down the coffin for its removal. Then I, a second time, became almost bereft of my senses. Could I have, by any means, preserved her body from putrefaction, I should have kept it by me to this day: though, I confess I should have by so doing, acted more like a madman than a rational being. But where is the man who, doating like me, could have supported such a severe blow with composure?

In

In my lucid intervals, however, for so they might have been not improperly called, I had resolved to have her buried in the church-yard adjoining to my garden in Somersetshire; and sent John down with the necessary people to prepare every thing for her interment.

When the dreadful day arrived, which was totally to deprive me of the sight of my dear angel, whom I had so long, so truly loved, I took one more embrace, and bathed her with my tears.

When she was shut up for ever from my longing eyes, and put into a hearse, I followed it to the place of interment, and was so eager to enjoy the luxury of grief without participation, that I would not suffer either Fisque or Saville to accompany me, though they begged to attend.

attend me in the most earnest manner. I, alone, attended my love to the grave, and would, joyfully, have sprung in after her, and have there ended my life and miseries together; but the rector of my parish, seeing by my disordered behaviour that I was not quite fit to be left to myself, endeavoured, after having performed the funeral service with a very becoming solemnity and decency, by all the arguments and rhetoric of a christian, a gentleman, and a scholar, to bring me into a just way of thinking upon the mournful occasion. I was, however, for a long time, incapable of listening to the dictates of reason; and to prove that my intellects were a little impaired by this last dreadful shock, I had a marble monument erected on Gertrude's grave, with the following inscription.

TO

Mr. FREELAND. 237

**TO
THE MEMORY
OF
GERTRUDE,
THE
MOST AMIABLE
AND
MOST VIRTUOUS
OF
WOMEN;
WHO,
IN THE BLOOM OF YOUTH,
FELL A VICTIM
TO
FILIAL DUTY,
AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN
AND
NINE MONTHS.**

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It was a long while before I could tell how to distinguish this most exemplary and most beloved of women. I could not bear to think of joining the name of a man, to whom she had been so cruelly sacrificed, to her baptismal one; nor could I let her lie undistinguished among the common dead.

Over this grave, rendered so dear to me by having received the remains of all that was most precious to me, do I frequently shed floods of tears. The vent which this melancholy spot affords to my sorrows, together with my reflections on the excellent admonitions of the amiable creature, whose death I shall ever most sincerely lament, have, I believe, kept me from making any attempt on my own life. Time has now mellowed my grief into a settled seriousness; and I feel an absolute disgust

disgust to all society, which, I am well assured, nothing can remove. I have lived here five years. My whole life is spent in trying to comply with my dear Gertrude's dying injunctions, and in contributing, as far as it is in my power, to that happiness in others, which I was never permitted to enjoy myself; and in devoutly praying for a speedy release from those afflictions, which I have found to be almost insupportable.

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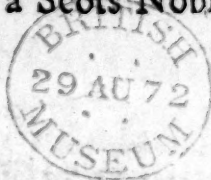
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